



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6740th meeting

Monday, 26 March 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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12-27487 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous: I am indeed pleased to be here today as the Council once again debates the important issue of the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding and the related issue of transitions.

In the last three years, we have come a long way in terms of sharpening our understanding of what building peace entails. There is a consensus across the United Nations and beyond on the broad priorities of what is inevitably a complex and long-term effort.

Building peace means helping national institutions reach a point where they are able to maintain a sufficient level of stability and security, in particular through respect for the rule of law and human rights. It also means that such national institutions are sufficiently representative to maintain the consensus necessary to advance the peacebuilding process. Peace is more likely to be sustained if tangible progress is also made in addressing basic needs and advancing economic recovery.

The consensus on peacebuilding has been refined through the report (S/2009/304) of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict and further elaborated on in the 2011 *World Development Report*. The Secretary-General's 2009 report in particular provides a broad framework by highlighting five recurring priorities for United Nations engagement in peacebuilding: first, the delivery of basic safety and security for citizens; secondly, inclusive political processes; thirdly, the provision of

basic services; fourthly, the restoration of core Government functions; and fifthly, economic revitalization.

Building peace is an ambitious undertaking; it reflects a generational effort that will continue long after peacekeepers have left. Success depends on national and international political will and decades of support from a broad array of international and regional actors.

What, then, is the specific role of peacekeepers in this effort? Peacekeepers are seen as the guarantors of the fragile shift from conflict to peace. When the Council mandates peacekeeping operations, it is not only to stabilize the country and keep the peace but also to contribute to the building of a sustainable peace.

Multidimensional peacekeeping operations are fundamentally political tools. A study undertaken by the Centre for International Cooperation on the peacebuilding elements of peacekeeping mandates found that peacebuilding tasks have been a steady feature of peacekeeping mandates since the early 1990s. Over time, those tasks have become more complex and wide-ranging. Most of the mandated peacebuilding tasks focus on the first two priority areas outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, namely, support for basic safety and security, and support for political processes. For instance, in resolution 1996 (2011), which set the mandate of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the term "peacebuilding" is mentioned nine times. Talking about the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding is not about expanding peacekeeping or adding new tasks to mandates. It is about making the most of the tasks that peacekeepers are already being asked to perform.

In an effort to further clarify the role of peacekeepers in peacebuilding vis-à-vis other actors, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support developed their "nexus paper", which states that peacekeeping operations have three peacebuilding roles: first, we help Governments articulate priorities by supporting consensus among national counterparts and the broader international community, and guiding overall strategy development and implementation; secondly, we enable other national and international actors to implement peacebuilding tasks by providing a security umbrella, logistical support and political space for reconciliation

efforts and economic recovery to develop; and, thirdly, we implement certain early peacebuilding tasks ourselves, including through support for political processes, security sector reform and by engaging in early capacity-building in certain areas, in close collaboration with other partners.

While we have developed a better and shared understanding of what peacebuilding entails and our specific role in it, the answer to successful peacebuilding does not lie in terms and definitions. The true challenge remains the question of how we build peace. To give just one example, there is broad consensus that strengthened institutions are a critical element of sustainable peace. Yet after years of engagement in such countries as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste, Haiti and others, despite undeniable and substantial progress, national institutions remain fragile and we, as well as our partners, are still grappling to find the best approach that would allow us to improve our individual contributions and yield the expected results.

To maximize the United Nations contribution to building peace, and specifically that of peacekeepers, three elements are critical. We must ensure that we identify and address the specific priorities of a country and its people. We have to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various United Nations actors and strengthen our partnerships with non-United Nations actors. We should periodically review and adjust our engagement to best adapt to an evolving situation on the ground.

Applying these elements continuously and systematically throughout our presence will have the added benefit of facilitating a more controlled drawdown and withdrawal of our engagement, and thereby help guarantee that our combined investment will result in long-lasting progress.

We do not believe that peacekeepers should address the full spectrum of peacebuilding activities. Peacekeepers are best suited to prioritizing those initiatives that advance the peace process or political objectives of a mission. These initiatives may also ensure security or lay the foundation for longer-term institution-building in a few key areas. The DPKO-DFS early peacebuilding strategy guides peacekeeping operations to use this political and security prism to identify appropriate activities. For the rest, other partners must come to the fore.

As I mentioned earlier, this is not about expanding the tasks of peacekeepers. In our experience, the Council does not need to assign new or more detailed tasks or mandates to peacekeeping operations. Rather, our focus should be on translating the broad goals of the Council into operational plans and tools on the basis of national priorities.

Determining national priorities in post-conflict countries is indeed a delicate task. When societies are still too torn and politically polarized, and when national consensus and reconciliation remain elusive, formulating objectives and pursuing them in a consensual manner is a political challenge. This is why the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General is essential to balancing the political process and institution-building imperatives, in close consultation with national actors. Also, institutional capacity to formulate priorities can be weak or non-existent. We must avoid overwhelming fragile institutions, and we must provide consistent and coherent support.

Strong national ownership and leadership in the formulation of peacebuilding priorities are essential. In Liberia, the host Government and the Peacebuilding Commission adopted a statement of mutual commitments in October 2010, which outlines commonly agreed peacebuilding priorities: the rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation. In Timor-Leste, the Strategic Development Plan provides the basis for international support to the country and is coordinated through the national priorities programme supported by the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste. The South Sudan Development Plan provides the national priorities around which the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan have developed their peacebuilding goals, called for in Security Council resolution 1996 (2011).

In this context, I would like to also mention the New Deal, which, as members know, was adopted at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea, last year and aims at aligning international development assistance around five peacebuilding and State-building goals. The New Deal stresses mutual obligations and strong national ownership. Among the signatories, seven countries playing host to United Nations missions — Afghanistan, Liberia, Timor-Leste, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and

the Central African Republic — have volunteered to trial this new approach. The Government of South Sudan has also requested the United Nations family to orient its engagement around those goals.

The New Deal reflects a strong expression of commitment by host countries to strengthening their leadership role in the peacebuilding process. We are working closely with relevant missions, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank on the follow up to the New Deal at the global level.

We count on Member States to align their various national policies behind those priorities articulated by host countries, and to speak with one voice in their multiple functions as Council members, representatives to the Fifth Committee, members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, or members of executive boards of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and international financial institutions.

To help national actors transition from war to peace, we have to work in partnership with United Nations and non-United Nations actors. Integrated, multidimensional United Nations missions help to realize this partnership as they bring together, through one leadership team, the whole spectrum of the capacities of the United Nations system. Yet, differing mandates, governance structures and financing arrangements complicate effective coordination and coherence focused on priorities.

An answer to this challenge lies in integrated planning and leadership. The integrated mission planning process provides a framework through which the United Nations leadership on the ground can articulate a joint vision and strategy for United Nations engagement based on the mandate and national priorities. A strong integrated plan would ideally clarify the contributions of each United Nations actor based on comparative advantage and actual capacity to deliver.

Responsibilities may change over time as priorities and capacities shift. Peacekeeping missions have a restricted time horizon and must synchronize their plans with those actors better suited to undertaking long-term engagements. For their part, United Nations partners often have limited capacities in the early post-conflict period and need time to scale up. In such circumstances, we try to bring our relative

strengths to bear. For instance, in the Sudan in 2005, the peacekeeping mission provided bridge funding for the integrated United Nations disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme until the United Nations Development Programme-administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund became available.

We must do more to increase incentives across the United Nations to work together. The international review of civilian capacities (see S/2011/85) recommended strengthening interoperability and flexibility across the United Nations to make better use of our own resources to support peacebuilding priorities and harmonize service delivery across agencies. DPKO is working within the Secretary-General's Steering Committee on civilian capacity to see how best to take these recommendations forward.

The United Nations is only one of many actors contributing to any peacebuilding effort. Building strong partnerships with regional organizations, bilateral partners and international financial institutions in the early stages of our planning processes is also necessary to ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach. Likewise, as missions draw down, regional and bilateral partners are critical as risks may persist after mission drawdown, requiring the planning of over-the-horizon security guarantees with the help of partners.

This takes me to my final point. How do we know when to move beyond a peacekeeping mission? Clearly, there is no easy, one-size-fits-all answer to this question. Just as the full impact of peacebuilding cannot be measured quantitatively, it requires keen judgment to know when it is appropriate for peacekeepers to withdraw. A key consideration in many cases is the need for the security assistance represented by blue-helmeted troops. As they draw down, the civilian elements of a peacekeeping operation may in some cases continue in a follow on presence. Indeed, the functions reflected in the mandate of peacebuilding missions or integrated offices are largely the same as those of multidimensional peacekeeping operations because they are focused on the same goal, namely, supporting a political process, assisting with institution-building in specific areas and linking through integration with the United Nations country team to ensure a coherent approach.

In an ideal scenario, drawdown should happen gradually and on the basis of a careful review of the

situation on the ground, discussions with our national, bilateral and regional partners, testing of the host country's capacity to assume responsibilities and, of course, public perceptions. Benchmarks for drawdown and exit should be included in our initial deployment plans, and revised to reflect the evolving situation on the ground.

It is clear that transitions do not follow a linear process. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the mandate, size, components and structure of the Mission have evolved over the last 12 years to reflect the changes in the political and security situation. As part of the last reconfiguration, we strengthened our peacebuilding contribution in the west while maintaining a very strong focus on the protection of civilians in the eastern parts of the country.

In Liberia, in February 2012, we conducted a technical assessment mission, the conclusions of which suggested that the security situation would allow for a reduction of the force component of the United Nations Mission in Liberia over the next three years but encouraged strengthening our police presence there, potentially reconfiguring our civilian roles and maintaining our political engagement.

That is why a regular review and adjustment of our mandates needs to consider the roles of United Nations and non-United Nations partners and their contributions to the building of peace, along with what we expect to be a possible follow-on presence. A drawdown for a mission often means significant adjustment and the start-up or surge of activities for our partners. A transition is not, and should not be, about simply reducing numbers in a peacekeeping operation.

No matter how much progress a country has made towards building peace, we have to be mindful that the departure of a peacekeeping mission can be expected to raise anxieties and may be destabilizing in and of itself. Building confidence between the host Government, key national stakeholders and the international community and clearly articulating the facts of a transition through continued dialogue and communication strategies are critical to a successful drawdown plan.

Efforts to build peace will continue long after a peacekeeping mission has left a country. As peacekeepers, we have a responsibility to countries

emerging from conflict to help secure a peace that will endure without our presence.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Malcorra.

Ms. Malcorra: I would like to join in Mr. Ladsous' recognition of the importance of United Nations engagement in peacebuilding in our mission areas and note the fundamental role of effective transitions in ensuring that we leave behind a sustainable peace.

Delivering an effective response to the peacebuilding needs of post-conflict countries requires from field support systems the same agility and flexibility that is required for other peacekeeping tasks. Indeed, the magnitude and extent of field missions and the funding involved throughout the duration of a mission's life cycle can have a significant impact, through job creation and local procurement, for example, each of which contributes to the building of peace. At the same time, it is recognized that their impact on the socio-economic situation can also be negative, for example, as a result of environmental degradation or distortions made to the job market.

In the global field support strategy (GFSS), due consideration has been given to the potential social and economic impact of United Nations missions and the need to support mission goals in peacebuilding. I would like to take this opportunity today to brief the Council on some examples where support given to field operations has had a positive impact.

The economic impact of our large multidimensional field missions is significant, especially when considering that deployment often occurs in post-conflict nations without a stable macroeconomic climate, which makes local acquisition of goods and services very difficult. As part of our strategy, we are introducing mechanisms that can promote local and regional procurement, which is an activity that can plant the seeds for private sector development.

To that end, the GFSS will enable our teams on the ground to target local vendors and clearly communicate procurement requirements in the official language of the country where possible. That can be challenging in the start-up phase of a mission, and it may not be feasible to rely on the local market.

However, over time, local vendors can get a sense of the requirements of the mission, and hopefully their business sense and ingenuity will encourage them to start offering the goods and services required.

There are certain products and services for which the local market can have a distinct advantage. Although that may represent a low percentage of our overall procurement, it can have an important impact on the local market. The flow-on effect in the private sector can be considerable and, if properly planned, can generate a growing and sustainable process for propelling individuals into long-term development, thereby contributing to efforts to break the cycle of poverty. It goes without saying that all such efforts must be undertaken in the context of United Nations rules and regulations.

Efforts have also been made to focus on a mission's ability to address critical social issues such as unemployment. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) provided clear and positive examples in that regard. High levels of unemployment and slow economic recovery make it difficult for youth and war-affected populations to find legal income-generating opportunities locally. As was explained in the 2011 *World Development Report*, such a situation presents a serious impediment to war-affected populations' ability to establish alternative livelihoods and encourage sustainable reintegration in local communities. In response to that need, UNMIL and its partners — the World Bank, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Public Works — designed a series of labour-intensive road repair projects designed to increase accessibility and create short-term employment opportunities. The projects were concentrated around vulnerable communities, such as communities along borders and those in close proximity to desirable natural resources.

Such projects created more than 75,000 jobs and channelled almost \$6 million into local communities, with the workforce comprising representation from all communities, ex-combatants, returnees and women. Six hundred kilometres of primary roads and 300 kilometres of secondary roads were rehabilitated, which improved year-round access to many parts of the country.

The impact of the projects was reviewed through an independent assessment that concluded that the

security situation in communities established along the roads improved, as there were real job opportunities. Furthermore, income was reinvested in small businesses, used to repay debt and put towards longer-term expenses such as education and housing. In other words, the project was building peace.

From a Department of Field Support perspective, the issue of transitions from one United Nations presence to another is equally critical, often requiring drawdown or sometimes a surge in operations. In Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance, the liquidation of one mission coincided with the start-up of another. One of the key lessons we have learned from such transitions is the need to prepare contingency plans in order to lay the foundation for adequate support for the possible follow-on presence, in addition to building a sustainable peace. Transitions may be inherently political processes, but they can succeed only if they are well prepared and executed. For that to happen, it is crucial that the substantive side and the support side plan in an integrated manner. That is particularly important as we need to recognize that many support issues, such as the question of asset liquidation, are highly political, while also dealing with the issue of expectations management and a fear of mission exit in terms of socio-economic impact.

In many countries, peacekeeping missions provide major support to national authorities with regard to infrastructure maintenance, transport and logistics, among others. As with our efforts in peacebuilding, we also have to work with our national counterparts to prepare for the impact that mission drawdown is likely to have on national resources, capacities and budgets.

The experiences of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and UNMIL demonstrate how joint planning with national counterparts can address those challenges and, to the extent possible, mitigate the impact of reduced logistical and infrastructural support to our national partners through coordinated planning and capacity-building. That being said, such a reduction in peacekeeping resources has wider implications for all partners, not only the national Government, as it is likely to impact on those partner's programmes and require increased commitment by them, both within the United Nations and beyond.

Against that background and recognizing the importance of integrating support services, we are

working with our partners in the Integration Steering Group and its sub-working groups to harmonize support costs across the United Nations. That will extend our services to agencies, funds and programmes and create greater transparency on how a smaller role of one United Nations entity will impact the resource requirements of others on the ground. That will also be facilitated through greater cooperation on the issue of trust funds and support costs applied to them. In this regard, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Secretariat have signed a memorandum of understanding that has overcome past funding constraints on the Peacebuilding Fund. The broader cost-recovery policy directed by the Controller is well under way.

A different yet important contribution the United Nations brings to post-conflict societies is in the form of national capacity development. Several of our missions have introduced specific strategies and programmes, such as certification programmes, that are aimed at strengthening national staff capacity. That was done in the Sudan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Timor-Leste. That should be our priority from the outset, given that national staff will play a critical role in the development of their country beyond our presence.

Our ongoing work on civilian capacities will be another vital part of that effort. Accessing more effectively the needed civilian experts and deploying them into missions to support the development of national capacities and to help us plan and execute peacebuilding tasks and effective transitions will depend on stronger partnerships between the United Nations and external providers, principally Member States. As such, we have to work together if we are to succeed.

Critically, national ownership underpins the entire civilian capacity initiative. That was identified clearly in the recent regional consultations in Bali, where the Finance Minister of Timor-Leste stressed her country's wish to lead its own peacebuilding process and direct international support in accordance with the country's own priorities.

Better support to national capacity-building is therefore a priority for civilian capacity, which in turn must be a priority for peacebuilding and effective transitions. UNDP is leading a system-wide group in looking at how we can do better in post-conflict contexts, and is carrying out a survey of United

Nations field presences to understand what tools are needed to do this more effectively. We expect that UNDP will be able to make recommendations this summer.

The situation does remain challenging, however. We still fail to deploy timely, certain civilian capacities in a timely manner to countries emerging from conflict and face persistent capacity gaps in five core areas: safety and security, the rule of law, inclusive political processes, core Government functionality and economic revitalization. Much like with our sourcing of key enabling assets for peacekeeping, we are also having difficulty in accessing niche capacities to respond to specialized needs.

We are, however, working out how to tackle those challenges. We are focused on building partnerships with Member States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and others, and on South-South cooperation in this regard. We are also recognizing the added value that comes from the real world experience of post-conflict recovery, democratic transition or building national institutions from scratch or very low capacity. That is the sort of capacity that those nations emerging from conflict find most useful — the experience of those who have actually confronted and worked through the same challenges they are now facing.

We must ensure that we are working to our strengths or, as we put it, delivering based on the principle of comparative advantage. Missions do not have to implement everything themselves and, of course, other partners may be better placed to deliver on the wide range of tasks that are expected. We will continue to work towards realizing mechanisms and modalities to best support that process.

Each of those activities — be they focused on the building of peace during a mission, on effectively transitioning to a sustainable and nationally owned peace as we withdraw, or on the deployment of the right civilian personnel to the right place and playing the right roles alongside our partners — are all aimed at delivering on our mandates, building national institutions, and ensuring that we do not have to return again once our missions have left.

The Security Council plays an enormous role in that, setting the direction for our efforts not only through mandates, but also through building and maintaining the political support required for delivery.

In addition, we count on the Council and its members to work with us as partners in ensuring a coherent, coordinated and sustained response to the complex challenges we face in building peace before, during and after the departure of our missions.

The President: I thank Ms. Malcorra for her briefing.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.



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Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf.

"The Security Council is following closely the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, and has received regular briefings on these issues.

"The Security Council expresses its serious concern about the insecurity and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, which is further complicated by the presence of armed groups and terrorist groups and their activities, as well as by the proliferation of weapons from within and outside the region, that threaten peace, security and stability of regional States. The Security Council calls for the national authorities and international, regional and subregional organizations to take urgent steps to further their concerted efforts to address these challenges in an effective and appropriate manner.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Mali by some elements of the Malian armed forces, and in this regard recalls its press statement of 22 March 2012. The Security Council condemns the acts initiated and carried out by mutinous troops against the democratically elected Government and demands they cease all violence and return to their barracks. The Security Council calls for the restoration of constitutional order and the holding of elections as previously scheduled.

"The Security Council condemns the attacks initiated and carried out by rebel groups against Malian Government forces, and calls on the rebels to cease all violence and to seek a peaceful solution through appropriate political dialogue.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need to uphold and respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali.

"The Security Council expresses its concern over the fragile security and humanitarian situation in the region, and notes that it has been exacerbated by drought, food shortages and the return of thousands of returnees following the Libyan crisis and other crises in the region.

"The Security Council was also informed that millions of people in the Sahel region are suffering from that crisis, forcing thousands to migrate to less affected neighbouring countries.

"The Security Council commends the joint efforts made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies of the United Nations to provide humanitarian assistance and to draw international attention to the scale of the problem in the Sahel region. The Security Council was informed of the proposal to appoint a senior regional humanitarian coordinator.

"The Security Council welcomes the emergency programmes undertaken by the national authorities of the region as an expression of their primary responsibility. The Security Council also welcomes the initiatives taken by regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, and efforts so far made by bilateral and multilateral partners to assist the Sahel countries to alleviate the regional food and nutrition crisis. The Security Council encourages the international community to provide support to resolve the crisis in Mali and the Sahel region based on an integrated strategy for immediate and long-term needs, encompassing security, development and humanitarian issues."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/7.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine Authority.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Serry.

Mr. Serry: The situation between the Palestinians and Israel remains uncertain and difficult. The events of the past month demonstrate a dangerous combination of no political progress, instability and violence on the ground, especially in Gaza, and an increasingly precarious situation for the Palestinian Authority (PA).

The Quartet principals met for consultations on 12 March here in New York to assess developments and to reiterate their commitment to the objectives of their 23 September statement (SG/2178). They welcomed the important effort led by Jordan to facilitate the resumption of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians with a view to shaping the path to a negotiated agreement before the end of the year. I met fellow Quartet envoys in Brussels on 21 March to prepare for the upcoming meeting of the Quartet principals, now scheduled for 11 April in Washington, D.C.

The unfortunate reality is that the parties have not yet found sufficient common ground to resume direct negotiations, and the prospects remain slim. The Jordanian track has been valuable, and we continue to encourage exploratory talks under Jordanian auspices to identify ways to move the process forward. We also continue to urge both sides to avoid any provocations that would be detrimental to the prospects for peace.

In parallel, we must continue to make progress on the ground for the Palestinians. The very viability of the Palestinian Authority is at stake, and ensuring its sustainability remains a fundamental priority. The meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the

Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians (AHLC) on 21 March in Brussels reconfirmed the institutional readiness of the Palestinian Authority to assume the functions required of a future State.

However, the primary concern of all AHLC members was the dire financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. We regret that technical agreements to strengthen revenue collection by Israel on behalf of the PA, which provides approximately 70 per cent of the net PA revenue, and to minimize revenue leakage during transfer have not been finalized. The AHLC members called on donors to meet the \$1 billion-financing requirement of the Palestinian Authority for 2012. I therefore reiterate the call on donors to meet their commitments and front-load contributions. Israel must also play its full role to help alleviate the fiscal situation of the PA.

I must underscore that Palestinian State-building efforts face increased risks. Little progress was achieved in the past several months, while financial and political pressure on the Palestinian Authority increased. The prolonged absence of a credible political horizon is beginning to undermine the viability of the Palestinian State-building effort. In support of the PA, the AHLC identified a range of immediate measures to be taken on the ground. The AHLC called on Israel to take further steps to improve the movement of people and goods, trade and exports in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as development in Area C and East Jerusalem.

Area C remains critical to the viability of a future Palestinian State. In the coming months, we must ensure a broadening of community-driven planning in Area C and the provision of basic services, including with regard to education and health. Recent progress in obtaining permits for key infrastructure in Area C is welcome. The United Nations is already engaged on those issues, at both the policy and programming levels. Moreover, due consideration should be given to the transfer of land to the Palestinian Authority in Area C, in particular in areas surrounding major urban centres, so as to facilitate more suitable urban development and relieve the acute pressure on the land and housing market.

In the absence of progress, there have been a number of potentially worrying developments in the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank, a comparison between January and February revealed that, while the

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) search operations in areas under the full control of the Palestinian Authority remained at the same level, the number of Palestinians injured during those operations more than tripled, from 46 to 138. Stone-throwing incidents by Palestinians increased significantly, along with the use of Molotov cocktails. Demonstrations and riots in the West Bank almost doubled. Most demonstrations protested Israeli actions, but some protested the Palestinian Authority's perceived failure to achieve reconciliation with Hamas.

Of the more than 100 Palestinians who were injured by the IDF during the reporting period, at least 90 were injured during demonstrations that resulted in clashes with the IDF. That included one Palestinian man critically injured on 5 March at a checkpoint near Ramallah when a tear gas canister hit his head directly. Large demonstrations are expected during the commemoration of the events of 30 March 1976 — referred to as Land Day by Palestinians — which will be held in various countries of the region on 30 March. In Lebanon, where Palestinian factions are also planning to participate in commemorative events, Lebanese authorities have declared that they are taking measures to avoid violence and the occurrence of incidents close to the Blue Line. The United Nations is monitoring the situation. Allow me to stress that the right of peaceful protest must be upheld and that protests must be kept strictly non-violent.

Citing security, the IDF conducted 273 operations into the West Bank. Early this morning, three Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were wounded during an Israeli incursion near Ramallah. On 8 March, a young Palestinian was shot dead, and two were injured, by Israeli security forces during a raid near Hebron, after a Palestinian stabbed and slightly injured an Israeli soldier. On 15 March, a 19-year-old female Israeli soldier was stabbed and moderately injured while riding the Jerusalem light rail near the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev; one Palestinian suspect was apprehended. On 6 March, two Palestinian children were killed, and three more were injured, when a piece of unexploded military ordnance detonated near the West Bank city of Hebron.

On 29 February, the Israeli Ministry of Communications and security forces confiscated broadcasting equipment from two Palestinian television stations in Area A of Ramallah after an unresolved dispute on the use of radio frequencies. Both channels have broadcast since 1996 and are

registered with the International Telecommunication Union. They have partially resumed transmission through support from other Palestinian channels.

The situation of the approximately 4,400 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention centres, 300 of whom are under administrative detention, remains an important focus of attention, in particular as some detainees have continued to protest their situation through hunger strikes. A high-profile case is that of Hana Shalabi, a female Palestinian prisoner affiliated with Islamic Jihad who started her hunger strike on 16 February in protest of alleged ill-treatment under administrative detention. Her condition has now reached a life-threatening stage. Meanwhile, on 25 March, an Israeli court rejected her appeal. I call for a reasonable resolution to this case on the basis of our reiterated view that the use of administrative detention must be exceptional. Those detained must be charged and face trial with judicial guarantees, or released without delay.

Settlement activity continued during the reporting period. On 25 March, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the illegal settlement outpost Migron, located on private Palestinian land, must be evacuated by the end of July, thus extending its own deadline for evacuation by four months and striking down an agreement reportedly reached between the Government and settlers to delay the evacuation by three years. Incidents of settler violence against Palestinians and their property resulted in 13 Palestinians injured, including one child. Demolition of Palestinian property left 158 people, including 38 children, homeless in East Jerusalem and Area C.

On 22 March, among other decisions, the Human Rights Council decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to examine the impact of Israeli settlements on Palestinian human rights. Israel is highly critical of the Council's action.

On a positive note, I am pleased to inform the Council about the substantive progress achieved in the implementation of the mandate entrusted by the General Assembly to the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. It has collected more than 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the barrier, which deviates from the Green Line. It has finished its work in four out of nine affected

governorates and has started its work in Salfit. That represents half of the estimated work. In that connection, in the light of the most recent visit to the occupied Palestinian territory by the Executive Director, we continue to urge that sustained donor support be provided to the work of the Register.

In Gaza, the most extensive escalation of violence since Operation Cast Lead took place from 9 to 13 March. The Quartet principals expressed concern and called for calm. The initial Israeli strike against the leader of the Popular Resistance Committees, who was allegedly involved in advanced planning for an attack against Israeli targets, resulted in a four-day exchange that resulted in 24 Palestinians being killed, including five civilians, and 71 Palestinians injured, including 55 civilians. A total of 11 Israeli civilians were injured, including one in critical condition. The Israeli Iron Dome anti-missile system was effective in intercepting military Grad missiles fired toward urban centres. Relative quiet was restored on 13 March through Egyptian mediation; President Abbas was also active in that regard. The calm remains tenuous and fragile, and we cannot stress enough the paramount importance of all efforts to maintain it.

Overall during the reporting period, a total of 211 rockets, including 80 Grad rockets, and 36 mortar shells were fired from Gaza into Israel, while the IDF conducted one incursion and 42 airstrikes into Gaza, resulting in four Palestinian civilians killed and 54 injured, while 20 Palestinian militants were killed and 15 injured. We have consistently condemned indiscriminate rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. Such attacks are unacceptable and must stop. We also urge Israel to show maximum restraint. All sides must respect their obligations to protect civilians, who often pay the price of violence.

I am pleased to note Israel's approval of key United Nations projects in Gaza. The most recent approvals include two housing projects, consisting of just under 1,000 units, 10 schools, a road and four water infrastructure-related projects — all to be implemented by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. That brings the total value of approved United Nations works in the Gaza strip to more than \$350 million. We will continue to work to address the manifold needs of the population of Gaza.

Our goal remains the lifting of the closure regime within the framework of resolution 1860 (2009). In that regard, the recent transfer of Gaza-produced date bars to the West Bank is a welcome step. An extension of the fishing limit will help to restore livelihood opportunities to some 3,000 families. We continue to call for the unrestricted import through legal crossings of aggregate, iron bar and cement, which will also benefit expanded construction of international community projects. In that effort, calm in Gaza and southern Israel is an indispensable condition to enable the proper environment for development.

Gaza also faces a fuel shortage that is beginning to extend beyond the rationing of electricity for households, which has been a feature over the past several years, to a situation where day-to-day life for Gazans is ever more dire. Hospitals and ambulance services are finding it increasingly difficult to function, and already water and sanitation systems are failing. All sides must take measures to resolve the supply problems through legitimate means in both the short and long term as soon as possible, and the de facto authorities in Gaza should assume their share of the responsibility in this regard.

There have been no major developments related to Palestinian reconciliation. We continue to support reconciliation efforts within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the positions of the Quartet and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Turning to Lebanon, the Council heard a briefing last week on the situation from the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Mr. Derek Plumbly. As was highlighted in that briefing, the situation along Lebanon's borders with Syria remains of concern. Around 900 refugees, fleeing fighting in the Syrian town of Al-Qusayr, arrived in Lebanon's Bekaa valley on 3 and 4 March. That was the largest influx of Syrian refugees since the crisis started over a year ago. The number of refugees in the Bekaa valley has reached approximately 5,000, while another 8,100 have registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government in northern Lebanon.

Over the past week, tensions have increased in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el Hilweh following the escape to the camp of the alleged leader of a militant group that is accused by the Lebanese

Armed Forces of plotting attacks against it. The Lebanese Armed Forces have increased control measures around the camp and requested Palestinian factions to hand over the alleged leader.

The overall situation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon area of operations has remained generally quiet. Air violations by the Israel Defense Forces have continued on an almost daily basis.

On 21 March, the Lebanese Cabinet adopted a decree on the establishment of a petroleum authority to manage the exploration and exploitation of Lebanon's potential hydrocarbon resources.

Let me now briefly say a few words on Syria, which remains the most pressing issue the United Nations has to address in the region. Violence on the ground has continued unabated, resulting in scores of people killed and injured. Credible estimates put the total death toll since the beginning of the uprising one year ago at more than 9,000. It is urgent to stop the fighting and prevent a further violent escalation of the conflict.

The Joint Special Envoy, who has recently briefed the Council, has continued his intensive diplomatic engagement to bring about a cessation of the violence and promote a peaceful political solution. He sent a mission to Damascus last week to pursue discussions on the six-point proposal he made to President Al-Assad on 11 March. The presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/6) adopted by the Council last week endorsed the six points and was an important signal, which the Secretary-General strongly welcomed.

We were informed this morning that the Syrian Government has now written to the Joint Special Envoy, Kofi Annan, accepting his six-point plan. Mr. Annan has written to President Al-Assad urging the Syrian Government to put its commitments into immediate effect. Mr. Annan has stressed that implementation will be key, not only for the Syrian people, who are caught in the middle of this tragedy, but also for the region and the international community as a whole. The support of all key regional and international actors is critical to help secure the effective implementation of the plan at all levels and create the conditions for a genuine political process that will meet the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people.

The Joint Envoy visited Moscow, where he met with Russian President Medvedev and Foreign

Minister Lavrov on Sunday. He is now in Beijing for consultations with the Chinese authorities. The Secretary-General is going to the League of Arab States summit in Baghdad with Deputy Joint Special Envoy Nasser Al-Kidwa, who will also participate in the Friends of Syria meeting in Istanbul on 1 April.

Immediate steps are now needed on the part of the Syrian Government to act on its commitments and demonstrate to the Syrian people that it is ready for a cessation of violence and a political process, issues on which the Joint Special Envoy will also engage the opposition.

It is vital to ensure humanitarian access and that assistance reaches those in need. The Syrian authorities invited United Nations agencies and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to participate in a Government-led humanitarian assessment from 18 to 26 March, which visited a number of governorates. That Government-led assessment falls short of the United Nations request for unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations. However, the participation of the United Nations at a technical level has allowed for the gathering of critical information, which confirms that there is a significant need for medical and food assistance, as well as for education and non-food items. We are ready to provide emergency aid immediately, and the Humanitarian Coordinator is in discussions with the Syrian authorities to ensure prompt and sustained delivery.

Turning back to the Middle East peace process, let me conclude by emphasizing the increased risks of a continued political vacuum. As I said to the AHLC last week, it will become increasingly difficult to sustain the achievements of Palestinian State-building without a political horizon, and the absence of progress can easily be filled by negative trends that make each day more uncertain.

It is this uncertain situation that the Quartet will have to address at its meeting on 11 April in Washington. It is imperative that the Quartet assume its responsibilities in directing collective efforts towards overcoming gaps in trust and substance, so that we do not lose sight of the ultimate and agreed goal of a two-State solution.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal restricted consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Mutaboba, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Bissau.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Her Excellency Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mutaboba.

Mr. Mutaboba: I am honoured to brief the Security Council on key developments in Guinea-Bissau. My last briefing was on 3 November 2011 (see S/PV.6648). The reporting period has largely been marked by a political transition that resulted from the medical evacuation and subsequent death, on 9 January 2012, of President Malam Bacai Sanhá.

My briefing today will focus on the challenging political and security environment stemming from the current political transition process aimed at restoring full constitutional order. Such order has now become a crucial priority in terms of meeting the emerging challenges and identifying ways forward on vital national action plans, particularly through national dialogue, with respect to the implementation of security sector reform (SSR) and the fight against impunity, drug trafficking and organized crime.

The late President Sanhá had consulted and set the date of the much-awaited national conference for

14 to 18 January 2012. However, his medical evacuation on 22 November 2011 delayed the preparations for the event, which has now been overtaken by the focus on the political transition following his death.

On 26 December, the security environment was unsettled by an armed attack on the General Staff Armory, with a reported removal of weapons. The Government denied a coup attempt, although on 30 December, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior said that there had been a plot to kill him and the Chief of Defence Staff, General Indjai. Twenty-four military officers, including Navy Chief Rear Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto, and one civilian were detained. Eight of the detainees were subsequently released. In the wake of the incident, two people were killed — a member of the rapid intervention police, and a police commander, Major Yaya Dabo, who was assassinated while on his way to surrender to the authorities.

Although the national conference was postponed indefinitely following the death of President Sanhá, work on technical preparations has continued, including on enhancing the inclusiveness of the process. The future of the initiative will depend on consultations under a new president.

On the political transition, following President Sanhá's funeral on 15 January, interim President Raimundo Pereira held wide-ranging consultations with registered political parties, the National Electoral Commission and some members of civil society, which led to a consensus to hold early presidential elections on 18 March. In support of the process, international partners provided financial and/or in-kind contributions to cover the budget of \$4.9 million, either through the United Nations Development Programme basket fund or directly to the National Electoral Commission. The consensus on the date of 18 March was later challenged by some of its strongest advocates among political parties in protest over the inability to update the voter registry, which was last updated in 2008.

The Supreme Court cleared 10 of 14 candidates to run in the elections, including former President Kumba Yalá and the ruling candidate of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Carlos Gomes Júnior. Some political parties argued that Mr. Gomes Júnior's candidacy was not constitutional, since the interim President was not constitutionally allowed to accept his resignation as Prime Minister. One of the 10 candidates, Braima Dialó,

of the African National Congress, dropped out of the race on 5 March, claiming a lack of conditions for free, fair and transparent elections.

Preparations for the elections were marred by violence on 20 February, when youths protesting their non-registration as voters in front of the offices of the National Electoral Commission were charged by the police, who in turn were manhandled and disarmed by the military. Subsequently, a joint command of the police and the military, with permanent technical support from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) within the framework of security sector reform, worked on security for the electoral process, with structures in all regions. The United Nations also provided multifaceted technical support for the entire electoral process.

The election campaign process from 2 to 16 March was peaceful. On 18 March, the first round of the presidential election was held in a peaceful and orderly manner. No major security incidents were reported. The killing of a former military intelligence chief, Samba Djaló, outside his home in Bissau by uniformed individuals marred an otherwise peaceful election day. Investigations into the killing are ongoing and linkages with the electoral process were refuted by many, including the President of the National Electoral Commission and the spokesperson of the armed forces. In a similar development, on 21 March, the former Chief of Defence Staff, Vice-Admiral Zamora Induta, who had met Sambo Djaló a few hours before the latter was killed, sought refuge inside the European Union (EU) premises, claiming fear for his life.

The African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the West African Economic and Monetary Union deployed a total of 154 election observers throughout the country. In addition, there were three electoral technical experts from South Africa and two from the EU. The observers were unanimous in their assessment that the polls had been free, fair and transparent.

On 20 March, a coalition of five candidates who had scored less than Carlos Gomes Júnior at the polls, including Kumba Yalá, claimed that there had been fraud at the polls and called for the nullification of the

results and for fresh polls following the establishment of a new voter registry. Sources close to Kumba Yalá also indicated that he would not participate in a run-off election.

On 21 March, the National Electoral Commission indicated that since no candidate had obtained 50 per cent plus one vote in the election, a run-off would be held on 22 April between Carlos Gomes Júnior and the second placed candidate, Kumba Yalá. Voter turnout was 55 per cent, lower than in the previous elections.

I would like now to turn to developments in the core areas of concern to the mandate of UNIOGBIS.

First, with regard to security sector reform, the initial boost to consultations between the CPLP, ECOWAS and the Government of Guinea-Bissau on a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the SSR road map appears to have dissipated. As an alternative option, ECOWAS and the Government undertook to sign a bilateral memorandum of understanding in furtherance of the implementation of the road map. However, progress was also interrupted by the political transition.

UNIOGBIS continued to support the Government on resource mobilization efforts for the five-year special pension fund for members of the defence and security institutions. Cape Verde pledged as much as the Government of Guinea-Bissau, that is, \$4.5 million, with \$1 million to be disbursed in early 2012. On 30 January, on the margins of the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as outgoing Chair of the African Union, convened an African Union partners' breakfast workshop in support of the Guinea-Bissau SSR process, where further pledges of assistance were indicated, including from Equatorial Guinea. On 10 February, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations signed a Peacebuilding Fund grant agreement for \$2,803,378, making the United Nations the first international partner to contribute to the pension fund. However, Government plans to launch the operation on 23 January were delayed in the wake of the political transition. Demobilization is a crucial step to trigger the rejuvenation of the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau. Its implementation is equally delayed.

On police reform, UNIOGBIS continued to provide technical support for enhanced community

policing through the establishment of model police stations, with the assistance of the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as support in the areas of training, vetting and certification. Special concern is also being paid to gender-related matters, including gender-based violence, including a focus on preventing and combating child-trafficking. Similar efforts are ongoing with respect to reform in the justice sector, while the refurbishment of military barracks and the provision of equipment and prospective training plans are being undertaken with the assistance of the Angolan Mission to Support Security and Defence Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau.

On the fight against impunity, in February 2012, three suspects were charged with qualified homicide, damage and grave physical offences in connection with the investigation into the assassination of General Tagme Na Waie, on 1 March 2009. The case is to be submitted to the Bissau criminal court for trial. Some suspects were cleared. As to the investigation into the assassination of President João Bernardo Vieira, on 2 March 2009, the Prosecutor General has yet to hear key witnesses who are outside the country.

Also, the dual assassinations of June 2009 have been referred to the Supreme Court. Investigations have reportedly been opened into the assassinations of Major Yaya Dabó, on 27 December 2011, and Colonel Samba Djaló, on 18 March 2012.

On the fight against illicit drug trafficking, there has been progress in the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative, notably in the functioning of the transnational crime unit, which, since the end of 2011, has been carrying out reporting activities, produced primary intelligence reports on international drug trafficking and participated in operational activities.

The implementation of the 2011 to 2014 national plan to combat illicit drug trafficking, and its political declaration, jointly designed by the Government, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has been hampered by financial constraints, in spite of existing capacity to implement it. The deficient judiciary system adds to an already long list of other collateral issues that impedes properly combating impunity, drug-trafficking and organized crime.

On benchmarks, I would also like to report on the progress made on the implementation of the United Nations joint strategic workplan in Guinea-Bissau.

Approximately 78 per cent of selected indicators are either on track or likely to be achieved within the time frame of 2017. On 22 February, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations system signed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2013-2017 as the integrated strategic framework. The UNDAF for the period from 2013 to 2017 defines the collective, coherent and integrated response of the United Nations to the priorities and needs of the country within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and is aligned with the second generation of the national poverty reduction strategy paper covering the period from 2011 to 2015. It will contribute to addressing the challenges of peacebuilding and development during the period from 2013 to 2017.

I would like to make several observations. The death of President Sanhá, who was a moderating force with considerable influence on the country's fractious political and military actors, has been a blow to peacebuilding plans and programmes in Guinea-Bissau. Most of 2012 will be taken up by, first, elections and issues related to the presidential election process, which started in January and could be completed by the end of May 2012, when a new President is likely to be sworn in; secondly, the PAIGC congress scheduled for July; and, thirdly, legislative elections towards the end of the year, probably around November. We had factored into our planning that the political focus from the second half of 2012 onwards would be increasingly on the legislative elections, with a clear impact on the progress of the activities of the United Nations system as well as of the State. The early presidential election has been an unanticipated, severe disruption.

The immediate impact of the early elections should not be underestimated. The Government has been severely constrained since January because, first, the powers of the interim President are constitutionally circumscribed and, secondly, the candidacy of the Prime Minister and the involvement of other officeholders in the campaign have further significantly affected Government business. That highlights the extent to which the legal framework in Guinea-Bissau needs fundamental revision, as the current Constitution has totally failed to provide clear guidance on fundamental issues relating to how, in situations such as this, holders of sovereign organs of the State should proceed in order to avoid vacuums that compromise the normal functioning of the State.

A case in point is the situation relating to the 2012 budget, which cannot be signed until there is an elected President; that has a number of consequences. These problems, jointly with other recent challenges, point to the already expressed need for the Security Council to address constitutional review in Guinea-Bissau. That is now imperative.

The national conference is a parliamentary initiative whose patron is the President of the Republic. Implementation this year depends on harmonization between the new President, Government and Parliament, bearing in mind the fact that the parliamentary term also expires in a few months' time. The window of opportunity for a national conference in this legislature is therefore quite narrow, but the task is not impossible.

The military events that took place on 26 December are symptomatic of a military leadership divided and lacking a uniform commitment to republican values. SSR therefore remains the cornerstone reform without which democracy and stability in Guinea-Bissau cannot be consolidated. The leadership of the new President, who is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, will be crucial.

SSR also requires convergence among the Government, international partners and the beneficiaries in the defence and security sectors on realistic and achievable targets and sequencing. The remaining obstacles to a finalized memorandum of understanding need to be resolved early in the new presidency. It is encouraging that various bilateral and multilateral international partners remain committed to assisting Guinea-Bissau in the implementation of its SSR strategy, but fine-tuning their roles remains a challenge.

Nevertheless, UNIOGBIS has been providing continuous technical assistance to the Government on coordination through working groups in the areas of defence, security and justice reforms, bringing together national and international partners. However, engagement by national and international actors needs to be further enhanced. National and international partners must be commended for having organized the early presidential election within such a short time frame. The election is an important milestone in the process of restoring constitutional order. A newly elected President must strive to be accommodative and

not sacrifice the visible, considerable progress achieved in the last three years.

The President: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Viotti.

Mrs. Viotti: I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his briefing and for his work as Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). I also welcome the presence among us of His Excellency Ambassador João Soares Da Gama, Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Since I last briefed the Council, Guinea-Bissau has made important strides towards sustainable peace. During the past months, the country's institutions have been able to maintain political stability and sustain economic growth. They have also managed to withstand two potentially destabilizing events, which occurred a few days apart: the incident of 26 December 2011 and the demise of President Malam Bacai Sanhá, on 9 January. The national authorities and the people of Guinea-Bissau overcame those difficult moments with political maturity and in full respect of the relevant provisions of the country's Constitution.

When facing the unexpected challenge of dealing with the presidential succession, the national leadership opted for steering the process in an inclusive and consultative manner. Interim President Raimundo Pereira opened up broad consultations with all political forces, including the opposition. In accordance with the Constitution, he scheduled the polls within 60 days of the President's demise, notwithstanding the huge logistical and financial challenges that that decision entailed.

The Guinea-Bissau configuration has endeavoured to extend immediate and concrete support to the country at this most delicate juncture. It met on 6 February to exchange views and to promote support and resource mobilization for the elections. The international community's timely and generous response has demonstrated its confidence in Guinea-Bissau during these challenging times.

According to electoral observers, including from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the first round of the presidential elections was considered to have been free, fair and transparent.

It is crucial now that all stakeholders, especially the two run-off candidates and their supporters, demonstrate political maturity, maintain a peaceful environment and refrain from any action that could lead to unnecessary tension. It is important that electoral grievances be resolved through legally established channels, with full respect for the rule of law.

While supporting Guinea-Bissau in its efforts to hold the anticipated elections, the configuration has not lost sight of other peacebuilding priorities, such as security sector reform. The launch of the pension fund for the armed forces and the security forces remains one of the highest priorities for peace consolidation and stability in the country. It is very important that the new Government, once installed, pursue the launch and implementation of the fund as a matter of priority.

As I highlighted in previous briefings, an area in which Guinea-Bissau has certainly made remarkable strides is macroeconomic management and economic revitalization. This month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted the fourth review of the country's performance under the Extended Credit Facility, as approved in May 2010. The mission concluded that Guinea-Bissau had made further progress in stabilizing its economy, reaching a growth rate of 5.3 per cent and meeting most structural benchmarks. The IMF team encouraged the Government to pursue its reform efforts and noted that political stability and improved security would be critical for sustained economic growth.

As the international community, we must continue to support Guinea-Bissau so that such achievements can help to create a virtuous cycle of stability and growth. That is why sustained efforts also need to be geared towards other peacebuilding priorities, among which is capacity-building to strengthen the justice sector, to consolidate the rule of law and to fight drug trafficking, as well as initiatives that address social challenges, including critical shortcomings in the delivery of basic social services

and the creation of opportunities for youth employment and empowerment.

We look forward to the successful and peaceful completion of the current electoral process and to continuing our proactive engagement with the new authorities on our joint peacebuilding agenda.

The President: I thank Mrs. Viotti for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to express my sincere thanks for the honour that you grant me, Mr. President, by giving me the floor before Council members, whom we would like to thank for their commitment to and understanding of the situation in our country. We would also like to commend Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and Mrs. Viotti for their remarkable work towards the peacebuilding and development of Guinea-Bissau.

This statement comes at a time when my country, Guinea-Bissau, is in the middle of an electoral period brought about by the passing on 9 January of President Malam Bacai Sanhá, who strove for dialogue, peace and development in Guinea-Bissau. As stipulated in the Constitution, after the death of the President of the Republic, early presidential elections should have taken place within 60 days following a series of internal political consultations so as to respect the will expressed by the country's various political parties. The Acting President of the Republic set the date of 18 March for the holding of the early presidential elections, thus upholding the Republic's Constitution.

However, the actual organization of those elections was not easy owing to the serious issue of their financing, in particular because of the very short two-month period for their organization and the country's financial difficulties. But, fortunately, thanks to the resolve of the national authorities and the international community's tireless commitment to help Guinea-Bissau to pursue the path of strengthening its young democracy and respecting the constitutional order, my country was able to gain the necessary financial and logistical assistance to hold those elections. They took place on 18 March, as planned, preceded by an exemplary electoral and incident-free

campaign. As a result, I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate my Government's gratitude to all countries and organizations that kindly once again stood alongside us during that electoral period.

Following the voting, international observers, in particular from the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Economic Community of West African States, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, a group of 10 parliamentarians from the United Kingdom and some from the European Union and South Africa, commended the peaceful climate in which the elections took place. They all described them as free, fair and transparent.

On 21 March, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) announced the provisional official results of the vote, which placed the former Prime Minister, Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, in the lead, with more than 48 per cent of the vote, followed by the former President of the Republic, Mr. Kumba Yalá, with more than 23 per cent of the vote. Given that neither of those two candidates gained more than 50 per cent of the required votes, it is provided for that they go to a second round, which, in principle, will be held towards the end of April.

Speaking even before the publication of the provisional results by the NEC, a group of five candidates, including the contender with the second-highest number of votes, made it known that it would not accept the results of the elections, citing irregularities and fraud, and requested that the elections be annulled. Once the provisional results were published, the five candidates lodged an appeal with the NEC on the basis of the same arguments, underscoring, furthermore, the lack of updated electoral registries that included new voters who had reached 18 years of age. At the same time, Mr. Kumba Yalá, as the candidate with the second-highest number of votes, announced that he would not participate in the second round of the election.

In that regard, it should be underscored that the NEC issued its decision yesterday, on 27 March, stating that those allegations were ill founded and that that group of candidates had a final recourse to the Supreme Court of Justice, in accordance with the law in force.

Despite the slightly tense atmosphere owing to the refusal of Mr. Kumba Yalá, supported by the four other candidates, to participate in the second round, we hope that decisions issued by the competent electoral

bodies, namely, the NEC and the Supreme Court of Justice, will be respected and that, in the interests of the country, the people's will and good sense will prevail and that the second round of elections will indeed take place.

Despite the current election challenge, the Government of Guinea-Bissau remains convinced that reform of the defence and security sector is crucial to peacebuilding in the country, and it is its foremost priority. We therefore hope that conditions will be rapidly met so as to move to implementing that reform through the upcoming launch of the special pension fund, which will enable the demobilization process of elements of the armed forces and security forces to start.

In that regard, we hope to receive as soon as possible the release of funds pledged by our partners. We also hope that other actors will join us in that step. Nevertheless, I would recall that the Government of Guinea-Bissau, under His Excellency Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, with the support of our bilateral and multilateral partners, had to agree to tremendous sacrifices that, to date, have enabled us to see very positive results in terms of the recovery of the national economy and public funds administration, as well as in the areas of infrastructure and combating drug trafficking, among others.

National dialogue remains one of Guinea-Bissau's priorities. In that regard, the National Conference on Reconciliation, which is to bring together political actors, civil society, elements of the defence and security forces, religious leaders and others, set up by President Bacai Sanhá, will indeed take place with the election of the Republic's new President. That will enable the people of Guinea-Bissau to freely express their opinion and to find a lasting path of understanding on issues affecting our country.

I would therefore like to conclude by reiterating my Government's gratitude to the international community for its tireless support to Guinea-Bissau to date. We ask it to continue to provide its valuable assistance to us in the context of peacebuilding and development in our country.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6744th meeting

Thursday, 29 March 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-27935 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Following consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council welcomes the Yemeni-led peaceful transition process to a just and democratic political system. It notes the recent progress, including the 21 February elections, which occurred in a largely peaceful manner and with an encouraging level of turnout, and the 25 February transfer of power to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, as per the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and implementation mechanism. The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen.

"The Security Council expresses concern at the recent deterioration in cooperation among political actors and the risks this poses to the transition. The Security Council reaffirms its resolution 2014 (2011), and calls upon all political actors in Yemen to remain committed to the political transition and constitutional order, and to play a constructive role in the process and reject violence.

"The Security Council notes that the second phase of the transition should focus on the holding of a conference for national dialogue, restructuring of the security forces, tackling the unauthorized possession of weapons outside the control of the State, passing legislation on transitional justice to support reconciliation, constitutional reform, electoral reform and the holding of general elections in 2014. The Security Council emphasizes the need for these political processes to be conducted in an inclusive manner

involving the full participation of the different segments of Yemeni society, including the regions of the country, the major social groups and the full and effective participation of women.

"The Security Council emphasizes the importance of a well-planned and peaceful preparatory process for the conference for national dialogue, and therefore urges the quick formation by the Yemeni Government of an inclusive preparatory committee involving the major constituencies. In the context of a genuinely inclusive process, the Security Council reminds the Yemeni Government and other actors of the need to release those protesters arbitrarily detained during the crisis.

"The Security Council expresses its strong concern about intensified terrorist attacks, including by Al-Qaida, within Yemen. It condemns such terrorist attacks in the strongest terms and supports the efforts of the Yemeni Government to combat terrorism in compliance with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. It expresses deep condolences to the families of the victims in the March attacks in Abyan, southern Yemen.

"The Security Council notes the formidable economic and social challenges confronting Yemen, which have left many Yemenis in acute need of humanitarian assistance. It welcomes the expansion of the humanitarian response capacity by United Nations agencies and partners, while noting its concern that the 2012 humanitarian response plan is significantly underfunded, and urges renewed and sustained support by donors for the plan. The Security Council also urges all parties to facilitate full, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council notes with appreciation the planned 23 May Friends of Yemen ministerial meeting in Riyadh and calls for the international community to maintain its active support to help the Yemeni Government meet the forthcoming political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges. The Security Council looks forward to an action plan set out by the Yemeni authorities, in close

cooperation with all the parties in Yemen and in a spirit of dialogue, on how these challenges could be addressed with the support of the international community. They affirm their view that the Friends of Yemen have a particularly important role to play by bringing together the main international actors in a common endeavour to support Yemen's overall transitional plans during the next two years.

"The Security Council reiterates that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, including acts of violence, should be held accountable. The Security Council also notes with concern that children continue to be recruited and used by armed groups and certain elements of the military and calls for continued national efforts to discourage the use and recruitment of child soldiers.

"The Security Council reiterates its call to all parties to remain fully committed to the success of the transition, and welcomes the continued engagement of the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser Jamal Benomar. It welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to dispatch a team of experts to monitor the implementation and provide advice to the parties in consultation with the Government of Yemen, and supports the intention of the United Nations to focus its political engagement through a small presence in Yemen of officials working closely alongside the United Nations country team in order to support Yemeni efforts to organize a national dialogue process that is inclusive, transparent and participatory, and will work, in coordination with partner missions, with the Yemeni Government to adopt transitional justice legislation, carry out constitutional reform and offer support up to and including the general elections in 2014. The Security Council remains closely engaged on the situation in Yemen and will continue to closely follow the next steps towards a peaceful political transition of power."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/8.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Sallal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to extend my congratulations to

Ambassador Sir Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for his competent and skilful management of the deliberations of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank the Ambassador of Togo, who steered the Council's proceedings last month with great skill and efficiency.

The Security Council has just adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2012/8, on the situation in my country. In that regard, I should like to make the following comments.

My Government expresses its gratitude to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and, in particular, to King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of fraternal Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, as well as to the member States of the Security Council, especially the permanent members, and the donor community, for their efforts in helping us overcome the hardships we are currently experiencing. We would also like to express our gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his earnest endeavours and good offices, as well as to his Special Adviser Jamal Benomar and his team, in following up the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and implementation mechanism.

Since the signing of that initiative, my country has experienced a number of positive developments, including the establishment of a Government of national reconciliation and a military and security committee. Most important were the presidential elections held on 21 February, which enjoyed a high level of participation by the people of Yemen and brought to office His Excellency Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour as President of the Republic of Yemen.

The Government of national reconciliation continues to face serious challenges that hinder the implementation of its development and economic programmes, including the suffocating economic crisis stemming from our limited resources and the stagnation in economic activity since 2011. The people of Yemen still continue to suffer as a result of ongoing shortages of electricity and water. In that regard, we count on the international community — especially our brothers from the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council — and look forward to the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Yemen that will be held in Riyadh on 23 May.

Over the past year, the unstable political situation in Yemen and the terrorist attacks that we have experienced have had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. According to United Nations statistics, the lives of 8 million Yemeni people are in jeopardy and they are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons — including from the governorates of Abyan, Sadah, Lahij, Hajjah, Adan, Amran and Taizz — has risen to 500,000. Those people, who are experiencing a humanitarian crisis, are being hosted in 11 of our 22 governorates. In spite the efforts of the Government to shelter and provide them with the necessary services, our limited resources prevent us from alleviating their suffering. In spite of the hardships we face in our country, Yemen hosts almost 1 million refugees from Somalia and the Horn of Africa, who, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, continue to flow into Yemen.

Yemen is a partner of the international community in combating terrorism. We are also a country that has been affected by that scourge. My Government is committed to fighting terrorism as

much as we can. At the same time, however, we count on the support of the international community to confront that challenge.

The President: There are no more names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the delegation of the United Kingdom, to thank all the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their respective staff and the secretariat of the Council, for all the support they have given to us in the month of March. It has been a busy month, and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues on our agenda. We could not have done it without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as the interpreters, meeting servicing staff and sound engineers. As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of all Council members in wishing the United States delegation good luck in the month of April.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6745th meeting

Wednesday, 4 April 2012, noon
New York

President:	Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Crowley
	Togo	Mr. Mbeou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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12-28357 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 12.20 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Council for the month of April 2012, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of March 2012. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Lyall Grant and his delegation for the great skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Mali by some elements of the Malian armed forces, and recalls in this regard its press statement of 22 March 2012 and its presidential statement of 26 March 2012. The Council calls on the mutineers to ensure the safety and security of all Malian officials and demands the immediate release of those detained. The Council renews its call for the immediate restoration of constitutional rule and the democratically elected Government and for the preservation of the electoral process.

"The Security Council supports the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which issued communiqués on 27 and 29 March 2012, and commends the work of President Blaise Compaoré, as ECOWAS facilitator, in promoting the return to full civilian

authority and the effective re-establishment of constitutional order in Mali. The Council also commends the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and of the African Union in this regard and takes note of the announcement of the mutineers to restore constitutional rule as of 1 April 2012. The Council expects the mutineers to take immediate steps to effectively implement this commitment and will follow developments closely.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the continued attacks, looting and seizure of territory carried out by rebel groups in the north of Mali and demands an immediate cessation of hostilities. The Council is alarmed by the presence in the region of the terrorist group Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which could lead to a further destabilization of the security situation. The Council calls upon the rebels to immediately cease all violence and urges all parties in Mali to seek a peaceful solution through appropriate political dialogue. The Council stresses the importance of the safety of civilians and of the respect of human rights.

"The Security Council reaffirms the need to uphold and respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali.

"The Security Council renews its serious concern over the insecurity and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Sahel region.

"The Council commends efforts of humanitarian organizations involved and calls on all parties in Mali to allow timely, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to civilians in need, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and guiding principles of emergency humanitarian assistance. The Council calls for an increased mobilization of the international community to support humanitarian efforts.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the risk posed by fighting to Mali's World Heritage sites.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to update it, as appropriate, on

developments in Mali and will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/9.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Daou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor at this meeting. As you know, my country, Mali, is currently undergoing one of the direst moments of its history. Our people today is suffering deeply, reeling and lost, but we have not lost all hope. I am certain that my people will be able to join forces across the nation to overcome the challenges we face.

Mali has never been in a worse situation. Not even in our worst nightmares could we have imagined our current suffering. The situation is indescribable and unprecedented. We have never experienced its like. Nowhere in the world has such a situation been seen; even a precedent might have helped us to overcome the depths of despair.

Even as I speak, our people is divided and our country threatened with partition. Northern Mali is today occupied by Tuareg rebels and Salafists. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons are living in unimaginable conditions. As the adage says, bad luck never arrives alone. Mali is today ostracized by the international community. This is the first time we have found ourselves in this position. We have never experienced such a situation before.

How did our country get to this point? Only a few weeks ago, we were known and held up as a beacon and a country where the democratic model had taken root, and were often cited as an exemplar for the African continent. How is it that today our country finds itself ostracized by the international community, torn apart, having lost its status and even subject to embargo?

I do not wish here to go into the profound causes of this situation; to do so would take too much time. I believe that I will have the opportunity to retrace that history on another occasion. I commend you, Sir, and the Council for having provided us with this opportunity to speak and for having adopted today's presidential statement (S/PRST/2012/9) on the painful situation, the institutional and security crises and the humanitarian challenges in my country.

Today, as I said, the people of Mali is divided, occupied and beset by serious institutional problems that have led us to be ostracized by the international community. We ask the Security Council to help Mali find a way out of the current crisis. It is a critical time, and the challenges are both numerous and complex. Today, it is a matter of survival.

I think that, today, the international community is speaking in a single voice with regard to a return to constitutional order, the elections and the condemnation of the coup, but the reality on the ground is indescribable. What we seek today is to help Mali to get back on its feet. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has imposed sanctions on Mali, and we understand that. We are full-fledged members of ECOWAS and the African Union. However, I have to say that it is the first time that we have seen such sanctions imposed on a member State under particularly difficult conditions.

At a time when we have hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons; when our territorial integrity is severely threatened; when the north is occupied; when there are all kinds of threats; when the populations in the occupied north are in complete distress, and when, in the southern part of the country, there has been a schism since the 22 March coup; and when there is all kinds of scheming by young politicians, is this the time to close our country's borders and to leave the people further thirsty and hungry? I believe that ECOWAS and the African Union should not exacerbate the situation that we are currently experiencing. To the contrary, at this time they should help us find a way forward.

The military officers who undertook the coup have asked to sit down with essential national forces — all our country's stakeholders, political parties and civil society — in order to seek a national consensus that could lead to the country finding its footing and accepting the minimal solution to emerge from this situation. I would therefore appeal to the Council to help Mali to emerge from the situation.

The President: There are no more names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6746th meeting

Thursday, 5 April 2012, 9.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Crowley
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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12-28494 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 9.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council recalls its presidential statements of 3 August 2011 and 21 March 2012 and its press statement of 1 March 2012.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the 2 April 2012 briefing of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan. The Security Council notes that the Syrian Government committed on 25 March 2012 to implement the Envoy's six-point proposal.

"The Security Council calls upon the Syrian Government to implement urgently and visibly its commitments, as it agreed to do in its communication to the Envoy of 1 April, to (a) cease troop movements towards population centres; (b) cease all use of heavy weapons in such centres; and (c) begin pullback of military concentrations in and around population centres, and to fulfil these in their entirety by no later than 10 April 2012.

"The Security Council calls upon all parties, including the opposition, to cease armed violence in all its forms within 48 hours of the implementation in their entirety by the Syrian Government of measures (a), (b) and (c) above. The Security Council further calls upon the opposition to engage with the Envoy in this regard.

"The Security Council underscores the importance of an effective and credible United Nations supervision mechanism in Syria to

monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and relevant aspects of the Envoy's six-point proposal. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to provide proposals for such a mechanism as soon as appropriate, after consultations with the Government of Syria. The Security Council stands ready to consider these proposals and to authorize an effective and impartial supervision mechanism upon implementation of a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties.

"The Security Council underscores the central importance of a peaceful political settlement to the Syrian crisis and reiterates its call for the urgent, comprehensive and immediate implementation of all aspects of the Envoy's six-point proposal. The Security Council reiterates its full support for the Envoy's six-point proposal aimed at bringing an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, securing humanitarian access and facilitating a Syrian-led political transition leading to a democratic, plural political system, in which citizens are equal regardless of their affiliations, ethnicities or beliefs, including through commencing a comprehensive political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition.

"The Security Council reiterates its call for the Syrian authorities to allow immediate, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations in need of assistance, in accordance with international law and guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. The Security Council calls upon all parties in Syria, in particular the Syrian authorities, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and relevant humanitarian organizations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance. To this end, the Security Council calls on all parties to immediately implement a daily-two hour humanitarian pause, as called for in the Envoy's six-point proposal.

"The Security Council requests the Envoy to update the Council on the cessation of violence in accordance with the above timeline, and on progress towards implementation of his six-point proposal in its entirety. In the light of these reports, the Security Council will consider further steps as appropriate."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/10.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item or its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.55 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6747th meeting

Tuesday, 10 April 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011)
(S/2012/185)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2012/185)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/185, which contains the second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler: It is a great pleasure to introduce the second report (S/2012/185) of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011) on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), as well as the situation in the country.

Since my last briefing of the Security Council (see S/PV.6675), there have been several important developments in Iraq. The United States completed the withdrawal of its armed forces from the country on 31 December. The withdrawal has provided the democratically elected Government of Iraq with the opportunity to turn a new page in its history and assert its country's full sovereignty. On 29 March, Iraq hosted the League of Arab States summit. That historic event marked Iraq's re-emergence as a major actor in the region.

It is true that domestic political issues and the potential fallout from regional crises, such as the one ongoing in Syria, continue to pose obstacles for Iraq as it marches on the road to full recovery. The continued delays in convening the national conference underscore the urgent need for Iraqi leaders to summon the political will and courage to work together to solve the

country's problems through an inclusive dialogue. In that regard, UNAMI will continue to remain steadfast in its commitment to assisting the Government and people of Iraq with addressing the major challenges facing their nation.

In many ways, the holding of the twenty-third League of Arab States summit in Baghdad on 29 March was a measure of how far Iraq has come after decades of war, dictatorship and economic hardship. The historic presence at the summit of the Emir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, also highlighted the significant improvement in relations between Iraq and Kuwait. Iraq now stands to play a positive role in the region as it assumes the chairmanship of the Arab League as a fully independent and sovereign State. This represents an important opportunity to play a leading role in addressing some of the pressing issues of concern to Arab States and improving cooperation among them.

The recent steps taken by Iraq and Kuwait to normalize their relations and resolve all the issues remaining between them is encouraging. I am hopeful that this willingness to work together, and the practical steps already taken by the Government of Iraq to fulfil its outstanding obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter, will help bring closure to this long-standing problem.

On 14 March, the Iraqi Prime Minister Mr. Al-Maliki undertook an important two-day visit to Kuwait. As a result, Iraq agreed to proceed with the pending Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project, pursuant to resolution 833 (1993), and to transfer its share of funds allocated for the project's completion to the United Nations immediately after Prime Minister Al-Maliki's visit. Most significantly, during the visit the two Governments agreed to resume their high-level bilateral talks and to hold the second Iraq-Kuwait high-level cooperation committee meeting this month. The meeting should provide both sides with an invaluable opportunity to review all pending bilateral issues, as well as Iraq's outstanding obligations under Chapter VII.

I commend the Kuwaiti and Iraqi Governments for their efforts to improve bilateral relations. Officials in both countries relayed their positions to the Secretary-General during his visit to Kuwait and Iraq at the end of March. In their meetings with the Secretary-General, both countries welcomed Mr. Al-Maliki's visit to Kuwait as a historic and

important step towards normalizing relations between them. During his visit, the Secretary-General urged the Iraqi Government to continue to work to fulfil all its obligations pursuant to all relevant outstanding United Nations resolutions under Chapter VII. I will continue to assist in expediting the normalization of relations between the two countries, including by further visits to Kuwait.

The continuing violence in Syria is fraught with risks that could have dangerous spillover effects on Iraq, affecting its fragile balance of power and increasing communal tensions. In addition, it has already begun to have an impact on Iraqi refugees in Syria. The United Nations country team has therefore undertaken extensive contingency planning to mitigate possible problems.

I took up my functions as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq some six months ago. Since then, I have expanded my consultations with political leaders of all elements of Iraqi society and with representatives of the political parties, including several visits to the Kurdistan region and other governorates.

Such political facilitation and outreach have become all the more important in the light of the tensions that have arisen between the main parliamentary blocs in Iraq, and which have developed into a political impasse. I have therefore encouraged Iraqi political parties and leaders to work together in a spirit of partnership towards finding the common ground that will help them resolve their differences. In that regard, Al-Iraqiya's decision to end its boycott of the Council of Ministers and the Council of Representatives was the right step.

It was President Talabani's suggestion to hold a national conference as a way to help put an end to the stalemate. So far, unfortunately, there has been no agreement on an agenda. An inclusive forum, however, is needed as a first step towards ending the political impasse. I call on all Iraqi leaders to sit down together to address all their differences in a meaningful way. UNAMI stands ready to continue to support such efforts.

Arab-Kurdish relations in general, and issues pertaining to the disputed internal boundaries in particular, remain at the heart of UNAMI's mandate. In that regard, the Standing Consultation Mechanism launched by UNAMI was an important forum for

addressing the issue of disputed internal boundaries. Regrettably, the series of political crises has made it difficult for the Mechanism to convene. Redoubling our efforts to facilitate progress on the issue of Kirkuk, my Deputy and I have made it a priority to pay regular visits to the area to promote political dialogue between the parties. During my most recent visit to Kirkuk, all the interlocutors, including the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the Provincial Council Chairman, emphasized the importance of holding provincial elections in Kirkuk as soon as possible and of the need for the United Nations to play a facilitation role in those and other outstanding issues.

It goes without saying that there can be no true democracy without free, fair and competitive elections. This makes UNAMI's work of providing electoral support all the more important for consolidating democracy in Iraq. At the request of the Council of Representatives, UNAMI has been serving as adviser and observer in the selection process of the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission before the expiration this month of the current Board's term. The participation of UNAMI and non-governmental organizations in the selection process is a clear signal that the process's transparency can be assured.

The final vote and selection of the nine new Commissioners, which was expected by the end of this month, is now unlikely to take place. In order, however, to avoid delays in the upcoming elections in the Kurdistan region in September and in the provincial elections in early 2013, the Council of Representatives has been encouraged to extend the mandate of the current Board of Commissioners so as to enable it to initiate preparations for holding those contests.

I would like to highlight specific concerns I have about the human rights situation in Iraq, particularly in terms of, first, civilian casualties; secondly, gender-based violence and women; thirdly, the situation minorities; and fourthly, internally displaced persons (IDPs).

I am concerned that Iraq's political situation is heightening communal tensions in the country and leading to an increase in the numbers of attacks on civilians. Since my most recent briefing to the Council, terrorist attacks have continued to target pilgrims and resulted in the killing and wounding of scores of

defenceless people practicing their religion. Other attacks across the country have indiscriminately targeted civilians, resulting in large numbers of deaths and injuries, including of children. In the first three months of 2012, a total of 613 civilians were killed and 1,800 injured. This is slightly less than civilians casualties last year; however every man, woman and child dying in terrorist attacks in the streets, markets or mosques of Iraq is one casualty too many. Such horrendous crimes against the Iraqi people need to stop and the violence must end if Iraq is to achieve the prosperous and secure future its people deserve.

Women's History Month was celebrated last month, but statistics indicate that Iraqi women continue to face widespread instances of gender-based violence, including domestic violence and so-called honour killings. Many of the issues related to the violation of the rights of women and girls arise from entrenched cultural traditions and social practices. It is the duty of Iraqi leaders to act responsibly and in unity to end the ongoing violence against women and girls.

In recent months, I have expanded my regular consultations with representatives of all minority communities around the country, including Christians, Shabaks, Sabean Mandeans and Yazidis. I would like to emphasize that violence against minorities is unacceptable and should have no place in Iraq as it moves forward on the path of consolidating democratic governance. UNAMI is able to provide support to the Iraqi authorities in protecting Iraq's ethnic and religious communities, and in promoting their rights in accordance with the Constitution, including fair representation in the political system in Iraq.

Despite the return of some 1 million internally displaced Iraqis since 2003, large numbers of individuals continue to be unable or unwilling to return to their places of origin. According to Government figures, there are still more than 1.3 million post-2006 displaced persons, representing more than 220,000 families. Baghdad hosts the largest number, with over 300,000 persons in almost 60,000 families. We can best help restore the rights of those who fled violence in recent years by ensuring their safe return to their homes. All Iraqis, including those displaced, are entitled to live in dignity. The United Nations is working to ensure that the displaced are adequately cared for as long as they are displaced, followed by their voluntary return, resettlement and local integration.

On the positive side, I am pleased to report that yesterday, 9 April, the Council of Representatives voted to endorse the commissioners to serve on Iraq's first independent High Commission for Human Rights. The importance of this institution cannot be underestimated, as it will serve as the first Iraqi-owned and led human rights institution and will form the cornerstone for promoting and protecting human rights in Iraq. The Government has taken steps to address human rights challenges by appointing a committee to oversee implementation of the National Action Plan on Human Rights, which was adopted by the Government in December 2011. The Government must build on these positive steps to do all that it can to ensure that its human rights obligations are met.

As I mentioned to the Council during my previous briefing, in moving forward with our integrated approach the United Nations country team will focus on three priority issues during the coming year. These are youth, water resource management and the environment. Making progress on these issues has the potential to improve the political, security and governance situations. We have embarked on efforts aimed at sensitizing the Government and people of Iraq to the role of youth in the socio-economic recovery of Iraq. Water and environment remain critical issues for the development in Iraq. I call on Iraq and its neighbouring countries to work together on finding a durable solution to managing their shared water resources.

A year ago, on 8 April 2011, the tragic incidents in Camp Ashraf led to the deaths of dozens of the camp's residents and to hundreds being injured. In an effort to reach a peaceful and durable solution, UNAMI and the Government of Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding on 25 December 2011. The Government of Iraq agreed to extend the deadline for the closure of the camp. From mid-February until now, almost 1,200 residents of Camp New Iraq have been safely relocated to the temporary transit location in Camp Hurriya, near Baghdad. United Nations monitors are deployed to monitor both the relocation and the situation in Camp Hurriya around the clock. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a team at Camp Hurriya to carry out the verification and adjudication of claims for refugee status.

I wish to make it clear that the memorandum of understanding concerns voluntary relocation, and that

its implementation is based firmly on all sides acting peacefully and in good faith. It should be noted that, on 8 April, an incident took place at Camp New Iraq during the preparation for the fourth transfer of residents. A confrontation developed; United Nations monitors now report that the situation has returned to calm. Both sides have now resumed cooperation in preparation for the next transfer.

I would have loved to have reported that another group of 400 residents had moved to Camp Hurriya. This incident, however, momentarily disrupted the relocation. But, as we speak, United Nations monitors are at Camp Hurriya and Camp New Iraq, and I am pleased to report that the next 400 residents will move immediately once the loading of the person's belongings is completed. This is a sign of the good will of the residents. I will continue to be actively engaged in ensuring that an understanding is reached on the remaining issues. With this move, half of the residents of Camp New Iraq will have been relocated to Camp Hurriya.

I would like to take this opportunity to make the following four further remarks. First, I would like to commend the Iraqi authorities, in particular Prime Minister Al-Maliki and his advisors, as well as the commanding General, the many Iraqi policemen and the Iraqi army, for their patience and cooperation in ensuring the safe and secure relocation of the first three groups of residents. I encourage them to pursue the relocation of the remaining residents in a manner that guarantees the residents' human rights, safety and security, and to avoid anything that could be seen as a provocation. We will do everything possible to assist the Government of Iraq in relocating the remaining residents. There are, however, still major obstacles ahead that might require flexibility on the deadline.

Secondly, I would like also to highlight that the camp residents, despite initial difficulties, have recently shown good will and cooperation in the relocation process. The residents have indeed come a long way. It is difficult to abandon a place where one has lived for more than two decades. I encourage the residents to continue to show good will and to work in a cooperative spirit.

Thirdly and most importantly, I reiterate my call on Member States to accept the residents of the camp in their countries. Now that UNHCR has begun its work, it is high time for the international community to

accept eligible candidates and fund the relocation process. The support of the international community is urgently needed. I welcomed the joint UNHCR/UNAMI resettlement conference, which took place in Geneva on 23 March. More than 30 Member States participated. However, no country has committed to accepting residents. A donors appeal meeting also took place the same day, seeking to raise \$39 million for the Ashraf project. Only one Member State made a concrete pledge. That falls far below what we had hoped. Without international support, the process cannot succeed.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my colleagues in UNAMI, UNHCR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their hard work and support. The Ashraf file placed a heavy burden on the Mission. I could count on the support of most of my colleagues. My admiration goes to the monitoring staff in Camp Hurriya and the UNHCR staff, in particular those who accompanied the convoys under truly dangerous conditions. As stated by the Secretary-General in his report, the process is still fragile and instances of violence cannot be excluded. We must therefore remain vigilant.

Coming to the end, I should like to highlight that, following the withdrawal of United States troops, there are now greater expectations for UNAMI to assist the Government and people of Iraq in addressing the major challenges facing their nation. Unfortunately, this comes at a time when resources made available to UNAMI have been shrinking.

I wish to take this opportunity to stress my personal commitment and that of my team in Baghdad to continuing to do our utmost to implement our comprehensive mandate from the Security Council in the areas of political facilitation, electoral support, human rights, reconstruction and development. I firmly believe that United Nations assistance at this critical juncture in Iraq's history remains essential.

I should like to conclude by thanking the members of the Council for their continued support, as well as the Government of Iraq and the wider membership of the United Nations. I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my colleagues at UNAMI and in the United Nations family for their efforts, dedication and perseverance under very difficult working conditions in Iraq.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madame, and your country on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am sure that your leadership skills and talents will help to achieve the objectives of the Security Council this month. I would like to also extend my thanks to the previous Security Council President, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his efforts during the month of March. I would also like to thank Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, and his team in Baghdad and New York for their sincere efforts in helping the people and Government of Iraq.

Having reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMI's work in Iraq (S/2012/185), I would like to present the following comments.

On the political level, the convening of the twenty-third regular session of the Arab summit in Baghdad on 29 March 2012 was a milestone for Iraq's return to its positive regional role and its integration into the Arab world after long years of isolation imposed on it following Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The summit was attended by presidents and leaders of Arab countries and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Iraq asked the Arab States to agree on a new vision for the relationships among Arab States in light of the great transformations in the region on the political, social, cultural and security levels. The absence of such a vision shall put us in complex situations that no country would be able to deal with alone. The summit adopted the Baghdad Declaration, which includes the positions of the Arab leaders regarding important regional and international issues.

The completion of the withdrawal of United States forces from all Iraqi territory, in accordance with the schedules agreed upon between Iraq and the United States in the status-of-forces agreement, is a historic victory for the option of negotiations, adopted by Iraq during a difficult and sensitive period of its modern history as it dealt with the issue of the presence of foreign troops. The withdrawal helped to establish a new era in the relationship between Iraq and the United States, where the Strategic Framework Agreement is the cornerstone of bilateral relations between the two countries. That agreement deals with political,

economic, commercial, cultural, scientific and other fields in order to drive bilateral relations to greater cooperation and understanding in the next phase, which we firmly believe will be balanced between two sovereign nations on the basis of common interests.

The withdrawal of United States forces helped Iraq to host the Arab summit in Baghdad as some Arab countries that severed diplomatic relations with Iraq after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 refused to restore diplomatic relations with Iraq after 2003 or to open their embassies in Baghdad so long as there were foreign forces in the country. Following the withdrawal of foreign troops, Iraq is moving now to a new stage in the democratic political process, based on the Constitution and the rule of law in resolving all problems, and focusing on building and developing the economy and on strengthening efforts to establish better relationships with other countries based on mutual respect, common interests and non-interference in internal affairs. Iraqis today have a new Iraq that enjoys complete sovereignty, independence and free will, which have been achieved by the awareness and determination of the Iraqi people.

Under the auspices of Mr. Jalal Talabani, President of the Republic of Iraq, the Iraqi political groups agreed on 6 February 2012 to achieve a national consensus to fulfil the aspirations of all the Iraqi people. They agreed on four guiding principles to continue the political process under the framework of the Iraqi Constitution, which are, first, standing as one bloc against terrorism and armed groups; secondly, the Constitution is the basis for the settlement of disputes and that all shall abide by it; thirdly, all components of the Iraqi people should be fully represented in the political process; fourthly and finally, the Iraqi judiciary is an independent authority and it is on an equal level with other authorities and must remain free from political interference.

The Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Khodair Al-Khozaei, met with the members of preparatory committee of the national conference on 12 February 2012. They agreed on the general framework of the agenda of the conference and the formation of subcommittees to study all the issues discussed in preparation for the national conference. I can assure the States members of the Security Council that Iraqis never fail to settle their disputes through peaceful means and negotiations. They learn in the new democracy to shout at each other instead of shooting at

each other and to resort to ballot boxes rather than bullet boxes.

In the framework of the tireless efforts made by the Iraqi Government to grant more powers to provincial councils, the Council of Ministers headed by Mr. Nuri Kamel Al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq, held a session in the province of Basra for the first time in the history of that province. During that session, a series of decisions were made to strengthen the powers of the provinces. In the conference on decentralization in Iraq, which was held on 27 February 2012, the Prime Minister stressed the need to give local Governments more power in the reconstruction field, which is the demand of many provinces in Iraq.

The achievement of security and stability was and remains a central priority in the work programme of the national partnership Government. That was clearly embodied in the Iraqi security forces' ability to take full responsibility for the security of the country before and after the withdrawal of foreign forces, which is reflected clearly in the lower level of violence across the country. The Prime Minister, during his meeting with senior security chiefs on 1 February, stressed the need to work to ensure measures to control the security situation and fill all possible gaps that terrorists are trying to use to destabilize the country. He also called for more coordination and cooperation between local governments, the military and security forces.

On the social and economic levels, on 8 March the Council of Representatives ratified the federal budget for 2012, with a total value of about \$100 billion, which reflects an increase of approximately 20 per cent from the federal budget for 2011. At the same time, the Iraqi economy has been witnessing notable improvement in its basic indicators since 2003, such as the unemployment rate, which fell from 51 per cent to 15 per cent; the poverty rate, which fell from 54 per cent to 23 per cent; and the inflation rate, which fell from 65 per cent to 6 per cent.

With the backing of Prime Minister Al-Maliki, the Supreme National Committee for the agricultural initiative in Iraq held a meeting on 4 January 2012 in which the ways to achieve further development in the agricultural sector in Iraq were discussed in the light of the phenomena of drought and climate change. In that context, the federal budget for 2012 allocated approximately \$500 million to support for agricultural

projects and for the advancement of the agricultural sector in Iraq.

On 1 March, the Prime Minister of Iraq visited the Ministry of Electricity to follow up on the Ministry's efforts to provide electric power to citizens. During his meeting with officials in the Ministry, he called for more cooperation and coordination between the Ministries of Oil and Electricity in order to provide fuel to power stations and facilitate the entry into Iraq of materials for the electricity sector. It should be noted that electricity production has seen a noticeable increase from 3,500 megawatts in 2003 to around 7,500 megawatts in 2012. However, the sharp rise in living standards and the salaries of Iraqi citizens has caused a huge increase of electricity consumption and demand, and the Government is trying to solve the problem.

Under the auspices of Prime Minister Al-Maliki, the first floating port in the province of Basra has been inaugurated, with an export capacity amounting to 850,000 barrels per day. The port represents one of the five ports to be constructed with a capacity of 850,000 barrels a day each. In a related matter, the rate of Iraqi oil production has continued to increase and amounted to 2.358 million barrels per day in 2010 and 2.653 million barrels per day in 2011. The Iraqi Government is planning to further increase production in 2012.

The Iraqi Government has allocated \$85 million from the federal budget for 2012 to fund programmes in partnership with the international community, including the specialized agencies of the United Nations, in order to implement a range of projects related to the United Nations development framework for Iraq.

On the human rights level, the Council of Representatives ratified the creation of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq on 9 April. That step is a milestone in improving human rights situation in the new Iraq and was designed to improve Iraq's human rights record and its ongoing programmes to promote respect for and the protection and advancement of human rights, to ensure people's enjoyment of those rights, to establish democratic life and to support human development.

In the framework of the efforts made by the Iraqi Government to determine the fate of missing persons who were victims of Saddam's brutal regime, the

Ministry of Human Rights signed on 12 March a memorandum of understanding with the International Commission on Missing Persons. The agreement was signed in order to enable Iraqis to carry out DNA tests on the remains of victims buried in mass graves, identify those remains and return them to their families after years of suffering from not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

On 5 March, the presidency of the Republic of Iraq ratified Law No. 16 of 2012 concerning the formal accession of Iraq to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006. The Convention was ratified to ensure and promote the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy fundamental rights in a way that preserves their human dignity.

In the framework of the efforts made by the Iraqi Government in the empowerment of Iraqi women, Iraq has withdrawn its reservation on article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in accordance with the provisions of article 8, part II of the Iraqi Constitution. The latter article grants a child born to an Iraqi woman the same right to obtain Iraqi citizenship as a child born to an Iraqi man. In the era of the Saddam regime, only children born to Iraqi men could obtain Iraqi citizenship.

Within the framework of the efforts made by Iraqi Government to develop the education sector in Iraq, the Prime Minister announced the near launch of a national strategy for education aimed at creating the right foundation for a road map for the improvement of education in the country and at strengthening cooperation with international institutions and organizations concerned with education.

On the regional and international levels, Saudi Arabia and Oman have appointed non-resident ambassadors to Iraq, while Palestine has appointed a resident ambassador, each of whose credential letters were received by President Jalal Talabani on 27 March. Iraq welcomes those appointments and emphasizes the Iraqi Government's intention to strengthen relations with Arab countries and fortify joint Arab cooperation and solidarity.

On 11 March, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Amr signed an agreement at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to immediately pay the money owed

to Egyptians who had worked in Iraq in the past but had not been paid by the former regime.

On 16 February, the Council of Representatives ratified the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That step fulfilled Iraq's obligation arising from resolution 1957 (2010).

Iraq, which endured and suffered from Al-Qaida and its affiliated terrorist groups before other countries, warns the entire international community to remain vigilant that the wave of Arab revolutions not be hijacked by Al-Qaida or other terrorist groups. Otherwise, people who are struggling for freedom, pluralism and justice will discover that extremist groups have stolen their spring, dreams and aspirations, distorted the great principles for which they fought, and tarnished the image of Islam and the values and principles of patriotism.

A great deal of blood has been shed under the banner of resisting the occupation in Iraq, and thousands of civilians have been killed, although those civilian were not part of any occupying force. Car bombs and suicide attacks continued even after the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq, which proves that fighting the occupation was simply a pretext used by terrorists to shed the blood of Iraqi citizens.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Syria, Iraq has upheld its rejection of the military option in dealing with the Syrian people's demands for freedom, democracy and political pluralism. We have called on the Syrian Government and the opposition to shun the military option in order to avoid seeing convoys of Syrian victims, civilian and military alike, because it will ultimately exacerbate the conflict and throw the country into civil war. History and a sense of moral responsibility urge all of us to work to contain the violence and the fire raging in Syria. We must exert pressure on both sides of the conflict to engage in a national dialogue, which we believe is the best option for resolving the crisis in Syria. Iraq strongly supports the efforts made by the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan, to contain the crisis and resolve it peacefully within a national framework.

With the help of UNAMI, and in particular the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Kobler, 1,200 members of the People's

Mujahedin Organization of Iran have been transferred from Camp Ashraf to Camp Liberty. The Iraqi Government urges the Security Council to help relocate those persons to other countries as the Iraqi Government cannot allow them to stay in Iraq, in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution.

On the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki visited the State of Kuwait on 14 February and met His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait. I am pleased to inform the estimated members of the Security Council that that visit brought about the final and comprehensive settlement of many issues, including the claims against Iraqi Airways by the Government of Kuwait. The visit also emphasized Iraq's fulfilment of its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, including the payment of Iraq's share of \$600,000 to the United Nations to cover the expenses of the border pillar maintenance project and find a just solution to the problems of Iraqi farmers. The visit also witnessed an agreement to secure free navigation in Khawr Abdallah, through cooperation and coordination between the two countries. I am also pleased to inform Council members that Iraq and Kuwait have agreed to hold the second session of the Joint Ministerial Committee on

29 April of this year in Baghdad to consider all outstanding issues, particularly the issues of compensation, missing persons and Kuwaiti properties.

My Government believes that that historic visit — which was described by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, during his visit to Kuwait on 28 March 2012, as an important step — and the results achieved mark the beginning of a new stage of bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait based on mutual trust and will contribute to strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

In conclusion, I would like to stress my Government's gratitude to the members of the Security Council and for the role of UNAMI in Iraq, as well as for the efforts made by Mr. Martin Kobler and the UNAMI team in Iraq and the United Nations to provide the support requested by the Iraqi Government, in accordance with the mechanisms agreed upon between the two sides.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list.

I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6748th meeting

Wednesday, 11 April 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Kadiri
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated
Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2012/160)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-28998 (E)

Please recycle 

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (S/2012/160)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/160, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General dated 14 March 2012 (S/2012/160) on the situation in Sierra Leone and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). The Council welcomes the briefing provided by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Mr. Michael von der Schulenburg, on 22 March 2012. The Council reaffirms its support for continuing efforts to consolidate peace in that country.

"The Security Council emphasizes that the Government of Sierra Leone bears primary responsibility for peacebuilding, security and long-term development in the country. The Council notes the steady progress achieved so far by the national authorities and people of Sierra Leone in a number of areas including national reconciliation, the promotion of gender equality and the preparation for national and local elections on 17 November 2012. The Council emphasizes the importance of these elections for consolidation of peace and security in Sierra Leone.

"The Security Council calls upon all political parties to engage constructively in an honest and open dialogue aimed at furthering national cohesion. The Council calls on the

Government of Sierra Leone, all political parties as well as other stakeholders to intensify their efforts to foster an environment that is conducive to the holding of peaceful, transparent, free and fair elections. The Council calls on the leadership of the political parties to undertake cross-party confidence-building measures, promote political participation and non-violence among their membership and ensure the full adherence to due process of law and to the recommendations of the 2 April 2009 joint communiqué, which, inter alia, calls for the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Committee to reinforce the neutrality and professionalism of the police, and the Political Parties Code of Conduct. The Council believes that these steps are essential to ensure public and international confidence in Sierra Leone's democratic process.

"The Security Council acknowledges the statement of the Government of Sierra Leone on 3 April 2012 clarifying its position regarding the arms delivered to the Sierra Leone Police. The Council underscores the importance for Sierra Leone's national authorities to respond proportionately to threats to the security of all citizens in Sierra Leone. The Council calls upon the Government to ensure that its security forces remain committed to upholding human rights and applicable international law.

"The Security Council calls on the Independent Media Commission to proactively monitor the media and ensure compliance with the code of conduct for the media and calls on the national authorities to address the administrative and financial challenges facing the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation.

"The Security Council commends the contribution of UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team to the peacebuilding and development priorities of Sierra Leone, and in particular through the integrated United Nations Joint Vision. The Council commends the achievements of Executive Representative Von der Schulenburg in Sierra Leone and urges the Secretary-General to promptly appoint a successor.

"The Security Council continues to emphasize the important role of the regional

organizations such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union in supporting Sierra Leone to achieve its peacebuilding security and long-term development goals. The Council acknowledges the work of the Transnational Organized Crime Unit and calls on Sierra Leone's authorities to work with its neighbours and regional partners in order to intensify their joint efforts to consolidate regional peace and security, including through tackling the challenges posed by drug trafficking and organized crime.

"The Security Council acknowledges the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in supporting peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone,

including in addressing the priority area of youth employment. The Council urges the PBC to continue working in support of UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team.

"The Security Council remains actively seized of this matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/11.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6749th meeting

Thursday, 12 April 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Huth
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Madureira
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	South Africa	Mr. Crowley
	Togo	Mr. Mbeou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

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12-29191 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council expresses its deep and growing alarm at the escalating conflict between the Sudan and South Sudan, as manifested most recently by the seizure and occupation of the town of Heglig and its oil fields in the Sudan by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The recent violence threatens to return both countries to full-scale war and the period of tragic loss of life and suffering, destroyed infrastructure and economic devastation, which they have worked so hard and so long to overcome. The Security Council demands a complete, immediate and unconditional end to all fighting; the withdrawal of the SPLA from Heglig; an end to Sudanese Armed Forces aerial bombardments; an end to repeated incidents of cross-border violence between the Sudan and South Sudan; and an end to support by both sides to proxies in the other country.

"The Security Council affirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both the Sudan and South Sudan. It recalls the importance of the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference and regional cooperation.

"The Security Council demands that both sides redeploy their forces 10 kilometres outside the North/South 1 January 1956 borderline in accordance with their Agreements of 29 June and 30 July 2011. It urges the Sudan and South Sudan to take immediate steps to establish a safe demilitarized border zone and activate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and reiterates its readiness to continue to support the parties in implementing this agreement with the support of the United Nations Interim

Security Force for Abyei, in accordance with resolution 2024 (2011).

"The Security Council calls on the Sudan and South Sudan to respect the letter and spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation of 10 February 2012.

"The Security Council reiterates its demand that the Sudan and South Sudan urgently redeploy their security forces immediately from the Abyei Area in accordance with their Agreement of 20 June 2011 and resolution 1990 (2011).

"The Security Council calls upon the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan urgently and peacefully to resolve the fundamental issues of security and border management, the situations in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei, and all outstanding Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues that are fueling the mistrust between the two countries. It further calls on the leaders of the Sudan and South Sudan to meet immediately in a summit as previously planned in order to advance the issues that stand in the way of achieving lasting peace.

"The Security Council underscores its support for the continuing efforts of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) to assist the Sudan and South Sudan to reach agreement on all outstanding issues, and encourages continuing partnership with the United Nations in this regard.

"The Security Council views the current situation as a serious threat to international peace and security. It will continue to follow the situation closely, and will take further steps as necessary. The Security Council looks forward to receiving a briefing from the AUHIP and Special Envoy Menkerios in the coming days."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/12.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.



Security Council

Distr.: General
12 April 2012

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 6750th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

**Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday,
12 April 2012, at 3.30 p.m.**

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

“On 12 April 2012, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 6750th meeting in private with the troop- and police- contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

“The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

“Members of the Council, Mr. Weisbrod-Weber and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views.”





Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6751st meeting

Saturday, 14 April 2012, 11 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Rice	(United States of America)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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12-29516 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/219, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Colombia, France, Germany, Morocco, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2042 (2012).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2042 (2012), which authorizes the deployment of an advance monitoring team to Syria. We regret that it comes only after the Syrian people have for more than one year suffered unimaginable brutality at the hands of a regime that has prioritized its own survival over the needs, rights and aspirations of the people it should serve and protect.

For more than one year, the Syrian regime has murdered, arbitrarily detained, tortured, abused and

terrorized innocent civilians. The death toll stands at more than 10,000; more than 10,000 remain in detention and 45,000 have fled across the borders. Throughout, the Syrian regime has ignored the calls of the international community, the League of Arab States, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council to stop the killing. It has made numerous commitments that it has failed to implement.

The six-point proposal of Mr. Kofi Annan, Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League, offers the last opportunity to finally put an end to the bloodshed. We pay tribute to Mr. Annan for his tireless efforts over the past six weeks. The relative de-escalation of violence achieved on 12 April was a tentative and positive first step towards ending the crisis. But it is just that, a first step. Tens of innocent civilians have been killed since 12 April, and heavy weapons remain deployed in population centres. Nevertheless, a narrow window now exists to improve the situation on the ground. That is why the Council has authorized the deployment of an advance mission to monitor the cessation of violence — and why, if it is sustained, we will work quickly to authorize a larger mission to monitor the cessation of violence and support the full implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point proposal.

Today's resolution is absolutely clear about the commitments that the Syrian regime must now fulfil. First, it must end the movement of troops towards, and begin to pull back from, population centres, and cease the use of heavy weapons. As the Joint Special Envoy has made clear, it must also return troops and heavy weapons to their barracks. Secondly, it must implement the full six-point proposal in its entirety. Thirdly, it must ensure that the monitoring mission that we have authorized can operate effectively, with full freedom of movement and access, freedom to interview individuals without retaliation against them, allow unobstructed communications and guarantee the mission's safety without prejudice to freedom of movement. The opposition, too, must refrain from violence and ensure that it gives the regime no excuse to renege on its commitments. Once the cessation of violence has been sustained, all parties must move quickly to engage in a Syrian-led political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): For many months now, the situation in Syria

has, understandably, been the subject of the constant attention and alarm of the international community. There have been too many casualties and too much suffering for the Syrian people, with too many destructive consequences if the crisis continues to ratchet up — not only for Syria itself but for regional peace and stability.

From the very beginning, Russia has firmly and consistently called for the non-use of force by all parties and has emphasized the need for a political solution to the problems confronting the country through an inclusive political dialogue conducted by the Syrians themselves. Based on respect for Syria's sovereignty, we have cautioned against destructive attempts at external interference and against imposing any kind of illusory fixes.

We supported today's Security Council resolution owing to the need for a rapid deployment to Syria of the United Nations advance observer mission. The resolution addresses requirements both for the Government of Syria and for opposition groups to fully cooperate with monitors and fulfil the Annan six-point proposals. On the initiative of Russia and a number of other members of the Council, the initial draft resolution underwent substantive changes to make it more balanced, appropriately reflect realities and take into account the prerogatives of the Syrian Government in receiving the observer mission on its territory.

The observers, which will include a Russian officer, will face a difficult challenge. They will need a high degree of professionalism, courage and objectivity. It is necessary to establish favourable conditions for the work of the observers, including from the perspective of ensuring security. We now await the Secretary-General's early submission to the Council of specific proposals for launching a broad-scale United Nations observer presence following consultations with the Government of Syria.

We also agreed to the resolution based on the need to support the Annan mission. Russia not only welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint Mr. Annan but, countering those who predicted the allegedly inevitable failure of the Envoy's mission, we also provided vigorous and effective support. We are now at an extremely critical juncture. It is essential that all Syrian parties, including the armed opposition, quickly refrain from violence, strictly abide by the Annan plan and begin to organize a broad-based

negotiating process. Russia will continue to be prepared to make its active contribution to meeting this challenge.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): This is the first Security Council resolution on Syria since the violent repression by the Syrian security forces started. We welcome the unity of the Council today. It comes deplorably late but, hopefully, not too late. Thanks to the commendable efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, the cessation of fighting has by and large held in Syria. However, as we speak, reports are coming in of renewed attacks by the Syrian security forces. We must therefore remain vigilant. Too many commitments made by Damascus in the past have not been kept. We must not tolerate further brinkmanship. The time for delaying tactics is definitely over.

It is clear that the Syrian Government has yet to fully comply with the commitments made to the Joint Special Envoy and as demanded by the Security Council. Damascus has yet to make the fundamental change of course demanded by Kofi Annan to enable a durable cessation of violence in all its forms. Damascus has to halt military forward movements and return troops and heavy weapons to their barracks. Only when those steps are fully implemented will the conditions for a sustainable cessation of violence exist. Equally important, all other forms of violence and human rights violations — such as arbitrary detention, torture, abduction, sexual violence and violence against children — must end immediately.

We applaud the fact that the opposition groups have committed to a cessation of fighting despite having been shelled by Government forces until the very last moment.

The swift deployment of the advance observer team will be an important element for the sustainable cessation of violence. We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on a potential observer mission next. But one thing is clear: the conditions for the deployment of observers must be in place. The Syrian Government must ensure that the advance team and the possible follow-on mission can freely and effectively implement their mandate. We know of too many other examples where United Nations missions have become a pawn in tactical games. We must not let that happen again. The credibility of the Security Council is at stake. We must send a clear message that any such impediments would come at a high price.

The deployment of an observer mission should also not lead to a mere freezing of the situation. A United Nations mission on the ground cannot serve as a substitute for the lack of will by the parties. Close and early linkage with the political transition process as foreseen in the six-point proposal by Mr. Annan is required, not least as an eventual exit option for the observers. One more thing: accountability for the crimes committed must be a central element of the transition process. There cannot be a return to the status quo ante.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support for the laudable efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan and his team.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China consistently maintains that the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and the choice and will of the Syrian people should be respected. The Syrian crisis should be resolved in a just, peaceful and proper manner through political dialogue. We urge all parties, including the Syrian Government and the opposition factions, to strictly honour their commitments to cease all acts of violence and create conditions for the launch of a Syrian-led inclusive political process.

Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan's mediation is the practical way out and an important channel for the political settlement of the Syrian crisis. China appreciates and supports the efforts made by Mr. Annan for a political solution of the Syrian crisis. We urge all parties in Syria to take real actions to support and cooperate with Mr. Annan in his mediation and continue the process of a political solution of the Syrian issue.

We call on the international community to continue its support for Mr. Annan's mediation efforts. We need to guard against any attempt to create difficulties or trouble for that mediation. Any words or deeds that stand in the way of Mr. Annan's mediation efforts are unacceptable and must be firmly opposed. What the relevant parties say and do about the Syrian issue should contribute to an easing of the tensions, a cessation of violence, the launch of a political dialogue and the maintenance of peace and stability in Syria and the Middle East, rather than the other way around.

The imminent deployment of the advance team of the supervision mission in Syria with the consent of the Syrian Government to swiftly kick off the task of

supervision and the cessation of violence will help consolidate the progress made by Joint Special Envoy Annan's mediation efforts, fully implement Mr. Annan's six-point proposal and launch the political process at an early date. We hope that the advance team will fully respect Syria's sovereignty, act in strict accordance with the mandate of the Security Council, carry out its mission in a neutral, objective and just manner, make good preparations for the deployment of the supervision mission and play an active and constructive role in sustaining the cessation of violence and bringing about lasting peace and stability in Syria.

We also hope that the Syrian Government and the other relevant parties will vigorously support and cooperate with the advance team. We hope that the Secretary-General will put forward his proposals on the deployment of the supervision mission as soon as possible.

In view of those remarks, China voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012), which the Security Council just adopted

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Kingdom of Morocco appreciates the efforts of the Security Council and its adoption by consensus today of its first resolution on the crisis in the sisterly country of Syria (resolution 2042 (2012)). The resolution is a practical translation of the hard work and intentions of the Security Council to further the success of the good-faith efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan on behalf of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to end the violence, achieve a political and peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria, and implement resolution 66/253, the declarations of 5 April 2012 and the relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States.

Since becoming a member of the Security Council, Morocco has worked with the other members in all efforts to enable the Council to speak with one voice, as that was the only way to influence events in Syria. We have also emphasized the positive and effective influence that all relevant parties have had on the country. We believe that today's resolution is an important milestone. We hope that it will be a decisive basis for the Security Council to address the situation in Syria.

The League of Arab States, which, since the beginning of the crisis, has played out an effective and constructive role in order to end the bloodshed and

resolve the situation in Syria in a wise manner and without resort to violence, expressed at its most recent summit, held in Baghdad, its strong support for the mission of Mr. Kofi Annan as it sought to achieve a rapid and comprehensive end to all acts of violence in Syria, while emphasizing the complete and immediate implementation of the six-point proposal presented by the Joint Special Envoy and accepted by all parties, so that a political solution for the crisis in Syria could be found and a response provided for the legitimate aspirations of the brotherly people of Syria.

The resolution adopted by the Security Council today is a quick response to the beginning of the implementation of the ceasefire in Syria as of yesterday morning. It has come into being after one year of violence and a period of international efforts that required swift action to call upon the Government of Syria and the opposition to end violence in all its forms and in a manner corresponding to their responsibilities, for the purpose of the allowing the full implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point proposal.

In today's resolution, the Security Council decided to deploy an advance team to Syria. We hope that its deployment and actual work will start as soon as possible in order to verify the end of all acts of violence and create appropriate conditions for the deployment of an observer mission.

In adopting all those measures, the Security Council has reaffirmed its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Syria, as well as to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We very much hope that our brothers in Syria, both in the Government and in the opposition, and according to their respective positions and responsibilities, will work with Mr. Annan in order to enable the success of his good-faith efforts and empower the people of Syria to heal their wounds, unify their ranks and achieve their legitimate aspirations to stability and dignity.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Today is indeed an important day for the peaceful resolution of the situation in Syria. It is also proof that the Security Council can indeed come together to fulfil its role in the global scheme of things. We are deeply appreciative of the spirit of accommodation exhibited by all Security Council members.

The Council's adoption of resolution 2042 (2012) is an important step in our overall objective of

promoting a peaceful political solution to the situation in Syria, with full respect for that country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Council's unanimous support of that objective sends a strong and unambiguous message of unity and commitment, urgency and responsibility, in addressing a situation that has had tragic humanitarian consequences and that has the potential to negatively affect an already fragile regional situation.

A central element of the resolution is the Council's unanimous and strong support for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy, Mr. Kofi Annan. His efforts and mission have not only brought the Council together around a common platform, they have also given us hope for the success of our collective goal. This is an example of how preventive diplomacy and mediation can deliver under principles of objectivity, balance, engagement and dialogue. Pakistan has backed the Special Envoy's mission from the outset, and we will continue to support his efforts. We believe that all sides in all quarters should cooperate fully with him to ensure the success of his mandate. Any steps or actions that might undermine his work should be avoided. We hope that the Council will stay the course in its collective pursuit of a peaceful political settlement of the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council's message today is, first and foremost, a call to the Syrian Government to cease its violence and the unfettered repression of its people, which has jeopardized peace and security in a region that is already experiencing an extremely fragile situation. The world has watched with the unprecedented violence with horror; the authorities there are responsible for enormous levels of death and torture and violations of every human right.

Finally, after more than a year of such atrocities, the Council has adopted a resolution (resolution 2042 (2012)) that seeks to end the violence and bring about political dialogue. The basis for that dialogue has been established by the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan. We believe that his management and efforts deserve our full support and gratitude. The presence of a United Nations mission will require the full backing and participation of the Government of Syria. That is what we are seeking and what we hope will be achieved.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2042 (2012). We hope that it will mark a turning point in the crisis in Syria. The point is to quickly deploy a strong and reliable United Nations mission with the task of verifying the implementation of Mr. Annan's plan. With this resolution the Security Council makes that goal its own. We hope that in the short term the resolution will open the way to an end to brutal violence and that we will be able to say to the Syrian people that the time of indiscriminate violence is finally over.

Since six o'clock Thursday morning the violence has subsided; however, the attacks against civilians in Homs today have confirmed the doubts that may exist as to the reality of the Syrian regime's commitment. We will very soon know if Syria will fulfil its commitment. If that does not happen, it will be the responsibility of all members of the Council to consider the measures that should be taken. We will judge the Syrian regime by its acts and nothing else.

Let us be clear: this partial de-escalation of repression comes very late, after more than 10,000 Syrians have fallen to the brutal violence of the Damascus regime. The perpetrators of this barbaric repression of a peaceful civilian population will not go unpunished, and I am happy that today, finally, the Security Council has been unanimous in recognizing their criminal responsibility.

Above all, we cannot consider this de-escalation of repression to be enough; it is up to the Syrian Government to fully and immediately fulfil the commitments it has made to the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The collective message we are sending today is an appeal for a halt to violence in every form — not just heavy artillery but also torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and sexual violence, all of which are violations of human rights and have been committed systematically and on a huge scale by the Syrian regime's security forces for 13 months.

Today's resolution enables the deployment of an advance mission to observe and assess the halt to the violence and to test the seriousness of the Syrians' commitment before authorizing a mission with enough scope to cover the whole territory. Such a mission cannot act without the withdrawal of the Syrian authorities' troops and heavy weaponry, as Mr. Annan

requested in the Security Council and as today's resolution recalls. Nor can it act if the Syrian regime does not respect the guarantees required of it by the Council. It is up to all Council members to reinforce that message to the Syrian authorities.

In sending this first mission, and, we hope, a second one soon after, we are not seeking merely to freeze the situation on the ground. The Council is supporting Mr. Annan's plan of action, designed to facilitate Syria's political transition to democracy in order to meet the aspirations that the Syrian people have so courageously expressed. Those are the conditions for launching the political process that we are attempting today to create on the ground by ending the violence and restoring the hope of the Syrian people that a peaceful political solution is possible.

This resolution marks another turning point: the rediscovered capacity of the international community to speak with one voice in response to the Syrian crisis and to contribute to a peaceful transition to democracy. That return by all to responsible action is another reason to rejoice. It is unquestionably a genuine reason for hope for the people of Syria. I would also like to stress France's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, the Secretary-General and Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, whose task is as difficult as it is crucial. It is thanks to all of their efforts that we have been able to act as one.

But that consensus is fragile. The line separating us from the abyss of a civil war or its regional ramifications is a narrow one. Let us not deceive ourselves: there can be no other process if this one founders through the irresponsible actions of some who have stubbornly propped up a regime that has given proof of how unworthy it is to govern Syria. Today we finally have a hope of a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria. France therefore solemnly calls on all members of the Council to support unreservedly the efforts aimed at meeting the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): India has consistently supported all efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis through an inclusive, Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. To that end, we have given our full support to the mission of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan. Earlier this morning, our Minister of External

Affairs spoke to Mr. Annan and underscored India's support for his mission.

It is a matter of satisfaction that Mr. Annan's efforts over the past six weeks have resulted in a cessation of violence. We welcome that development and the commitment of the Government of Syria to the six-point plan that Mr. Annan has proposed. We expect that the Syrian opposition will also adhere to the relevant parts of the plan, renounce violence and cooperate fully with Mr. Annan.

We voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012) today so that an advance team of the United Nations supervision mission may be deployed expeditiously to monitor the cessation of violence. We hope that all parties, including the opposition, will implement their commitments and cooperate with the mission. It is also necessary that the mission carry out its work impartially, fairly and independently, with due respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

For the success of the Annan plan and the observer mission, it is necessary that they be accompanied by an inclusive Syrian-led political process. The cessation of violence should create a conducive environment for such a process to start as early as possible. We have noted the commitment of the Government of Syria to such a process. We expect that the opposition will also engage seriously in the process, so that the crisis is resolved without any further bloodshed; peace, stability and security are re-established; and the people of Syria are able to focus their energies on socio-economic development.

For the success of the Annan mission, it is also necessary that all countries in Syria's neighbourhood and beyond facilitate and extend their support for a political resolution of the Syrian crisis under the auspices of the Joint Special Envoy. India, for its part, will continue to extend full support for the impartial implementation of Mr. Annan's six-point plan.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): My country welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2042 (2012), on Syria. This is an important event in the light of the fact that several times in the past the Council has failed to speak with one voice on the serious crisis in Syria. The adoption of this resolution constitutes still greater support by the Council to the mission led by Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of

Arab States Kofi Annan, reinforcing its presidential statement of 5 April (S/PRST/2012/10).

Today the Council has authorized the deployment of a limited observer team to Syria to monitor the cessation of violence by all parties, so as to facilitate the immediate and full implementation of the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan, which entered into force on 12 April. In doing so, the Council has demonstrated its engagement and resolve to work as one to find a timely and lasting solution to the crisis that Syria has lived under for more than a year. My country strongly supports the implementation of the terms of the resolution by all parties. We take this opportunity to renew our support for Mr. Annan and his team.

The Syrian people have long awaited such an action from the Security Council. It is therefore important that all of its members — especially those that hold some sway with the Government or any element of the opposition — work to promote the resolution's implementation. The resolution should pave the way towards an inclusive political process, involving all Syrians in building a free, peaceful and prosperous nation.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): From the very beginning, Azerbaijan has consistently supported all efforts in connection with the situation in Syria aimed at ending violence, overcoming the crisis and finding a solution by peaceful means and through dialogue.

From the outset, we have also expressed our full support for the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan, and for his six-point proposal. Needless to say, the Joint Special Envoy is doing his utmost and exploring all possible avenues to end the Syrian crisis peacefully. We highly appreciate his efforts in that regard. The Security Council supported the mission of the Special Envoy right from its inception. The adoption of resolution 2042 (2012) today is yet another illustration of the unanimity within the Council.

We note that the parties involved committed to implement the six-point plan of the Joint Special Envoy and started taking important practical steps to that end. At the same time, the resolution calls for the urgent, comprehensive and immediate implementation of all elements of the Envoy's six-point plan, which aim at bringing an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, securing humanitarian access

and facilitating a Syrian-led political process leading to a democratic, pluralistic political system.

The resolution provides for the establishment of a United Nations supervision mission in Syria to monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and for guaranteeing the effective operation of the mission, including its advance team. It is important that the resolution reaffirms the commitment of the Security Council to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

Azerbaijan voted in favour of the resolution based on that understanding and with the hope that its adoption would contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at encouraging dialogue, overcoming the crisis and putting an end to human suffering.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Portugal welcomes the adoption of resolution 2042 (2012). The Security Council has just sent a united message with its unanimous adoption of a resolution on Syria. It is a first step, although one that comes tragically late and in the wake of thousands of dead and injured. It is only a first step; others will have to follow to ensure the full cessation of violence and to avoid a civil war.

Portugal reiterates its full support and appreciation for the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. We call on the Syrian Government to cooperate with him fully and without delay and to immediately and visibly implement the six-point plan in its entirety, as it has committed to do.

Portugal also stresses the importance — indeed, the absolute necessity — of the withdrawal of all Syrian Government troops and heavy weapons from population centres to their barracks. Portugal also calls upon the Syrian Government to ensure the effective operation of the United Nations monitoring mission, including its advance team, as set forth in the resolution we just adopted. All parties must guarantee the safety of the United Nations monitors without prejudice to their freedom of movement and access. We reiterate our appeal for full, immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access. We also wish to stress the need for all those responsible for human rights violations to be held accountable.

We call on all parties to seize this opportunity, to cease all armed violence in all its forms and to fully cooperate with Special Envoy Annan, to initiate a

Syrian-led, credible political process that will meet the legitimate expectations of the Syrian people in terms of freedom, democracy and equality.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa has always been deeply concerned about the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria. We emphasize that there is a need for the violence to cease. South Africa strongly supports the efforts of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, which have the ultimate aim of committing all sides to peaceful dialogue in order to promote an all-inclusive process of negotiations leading to a political outcome that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. The situation in Syria remains fragile. We reiterate our call for all sides to the conflict to fully implement their commitments under the six-point plan of Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan.

We welcome the fact that the Syrian Government has started to implement its commitments under the plan. We call on all parties, including the opposition, to sustain the ceasefire. In that regard, South Africa supports the call made by Joint Special Envoy Annan regarding the urgent deployment of a United Nations observer mission to verify and monitor the ceasefire. We call on all sides to the conflict to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of such a mission, once it is deployed.

We are deeply pleased that the Council has been able to unanimously adopt resolution 2042 (2012) today, providing for the deployment of the advance team of the United Nations observer mission.

As we work towards the resolution of the Syrian crisis, it is vital that the international community respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and work with the Syrian people to bring about a peaceful political solution to their crisis.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala voted in favour of resolution 2042 (2012), consistent with the position that we adopted from the very beginning of the situation taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic. We have always maintained that the violence must cease immediately and that the only way out is through a process of political dialogue led by the Syrians themselves that leads to the reforms demanded by the people.

Our support for this resolution is not only in pursuit of those goals, but also heralds our full support

for the initiative of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan. Likewise, it reflects our continuing support for the League of Arab States in seeking a peaceful outcome to the situation that has brought us together today.

My delegation considers today's resolution as an opportunity, perhaps the only opportunity, to reverse the spiral of violence and take a first step towards a better future for all Syrian citizens.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

After more than a year of brutal violence inflicted by the Government of Syria on its own people, after close to 10,000 deaths, after driving almost 45,000 Syrians out of their country and many more out of their homes, and after the grotesque destruction by Syria's own armed forces of Syrian towns and neighbourhoods, the Syrian Government has claimed that it is finally ready to step back from its murderous policies.

Today, with resolution 2042 (2012), the Security Council has indicated that it will judge the Syrian regime by its actions, not its words. The Council has authorized an advance group of monitors to verify the Syrian Government's compliance. In doing so, the Council has taken a step towards fulfilling its own responsibilities. And it is about time.

On Thursday, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan, reported that a "fragile calm appears to be prevailing" in Syria. We all hope that it will continue to prevail. But we are under no illusions.

Two days of diminished violence after a year of murderous rampage hardly proves that the regime is serious about honouring its commitments. Just today, Syrian forces resumed their brutal shelling of Homs and shot innocent mourners at a funeral in Aleppo. This resumed violence has cast serious doubt, yet again, on the regime's commitment to a cessation of violence.

Despite that aggression, the Syrian opposition has largely refrained from responding and has honourably sought to extend the fragile calm. The regime's tanks, heavy weapons and troops maintain their chokehold on population centres, ready to resume attacks at any time. Towns in large areas remain cut off, and the Al-Assad regime maintains snipers and roadblocks throughout

Syria. Reports continue to come in that protestors have been killed and arrested and thousands of activists remain detained.

The Syrian Government must meet all of its commitments, not only the bare minimum. It must do so now. The suffering of the Syrian people has gone on far too long. For many months they protested peacefully, only to be met with violent retribution by their own Government. When some protestors finally dared to respond in self-defence, the retribution got immeasurably worse. The Arab League proposed a way forward to end the violence and meet the aspirations of the Syrian people. The regime of Bashar Al-Assad responded with broken promises, only to be followed by intensified violence.

In the final days before 12 April, we saw an outrageous escalation of violence by the Al-Assad regime, including the stepped-up use of heavy artillery on civilian areas and Syrian forces firing across borders into Turkey and Lebanon. This horrific cycle has lasted way too long. The Syrian people must be allowed to exercise their rights and freedoms peacefully, without fear of attack, detention, torture or death.

We commend the opposition for the strength it has shown in observing the ceasefire after the brutality it has endured. We demand that the Syrian Government at last honour its commitments. Those commitments are plain to everyone.

Both the Security Council and the League of Arab States have fully endorsed Mr. Annan's six-point plan. As Secretary Clinton noted, the plan is not a menu of options — it is a comprehensive set of obligations that requires visible and verifiable actions by the Government of Syria.

The resolution just adopted reaffirms the Council's support for all elements of the Envoy's plan, including an immediate end to violence, securing humanitarian access and a Syrian-led political transition that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people. The resolution stresses that the Syrian Government must immediately fulfil its remaining obligations to bring about a full cessation of violence. It emphasizes the necessity of the Syrian Government immediately withdrawing all of its troops and heavy weapons from population centres, and returning its soldiers and their equipment to their barracks.

The resolution authorizes the Secretary-General to send an initial team of up to 30 observers, to verify that the Syrian Government is doing what it is obliged to do, including ensuring that the full monitoring mission can do its job unimpeded, with full freedom of movement, full access to people and institutions and unobstructed communications. The resolution also expresses the Council's intention to establish a larger observer mission once the Secretary-General presents a blueprint, and if it is clear that the ceasefire is holding and that the Government is cooperative. We see the advance team's deployment as an important test of the Syrian Government's intentions. If the Government obstructs their work, it will raise serious concerns about moving forward with the establishment of the full mission.

We await the Secretary-General's proposal for a full observation mission and express our willingness to work quickly with Council members to authorize such a mission, if indeed the Syrian Government fulfils its commitments.

The United States expresses its appreciation once again to Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan for his dedicated work to try to stop the violence, respect the rights of the Syrian people and begin a transition towards stable and legitimate governance.

The opportunity is there; the burden is now on the Syrian Government to seize it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As members may recall, in the statement I made to the Council during the meeting (S/PV.6627) it held on 4 October 2011, I described a painful event that had occurred that same day in Aleppo, in northern Syria, during which armed gangs assassinated Saria Hassoun, the son of the Imam of the Syrian Arab Republic, and a university professor. Coincidentally, at today's meeting, I can, on behalf of my country — both the Government and the people — inform the Council that last night the Syrian authorities arrested two young men who were involved in the assassination of the Imam's son. The two men — Syrian nationals — have confessed to their crime, stating that they had each received \$800 for every crime they committed.

At the time I made that statement, some raised questions as to the presence of armed gangs in my country. However, today, fortunately, we have heard many colleagues encouraging those armed gangs to observe their commitments to the plan put forward by Kofi Annan, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Syria, as all are aware, welcomed Mr. Annan's mission from the very beginning and has interacted with it, and the Special Envoy, in a positive and adequate manner. It has stated that it would spare no effort to ensure the mission's success, within the framework of the sentiments of national responsibility that are impelling us all to put an end to the painful crisis that Syria is experiencing, which undermines the safety and stability of the Syrian Arab Republic in its entirety — the State and the people.

My country's Government has taken serious measures aimed at fulfilling its obligations under the six-point plan. It has declared its commitment to stopping armed confrontations as from 6 a.m. yesterday, and has indeed done so. The Government is providing to Mr. Annan, in writing and on a regular basis, information on the measures taken to implement the six-point plan. In addition, my country, Syria, has also accepted the concept of a United Nations supervision mechanism that would operate within the limits of Syrian sovereignty, which the Syrian people consider a red line that there can be no justification for crossing. We are currently in negotiations with the Special Envoy and his technical team in Damascus on the drafting of a special protocol that would guarantee the deployment of a team of observers.

In return for this openness, cooperation and commitment on the part of Syria, and since Damascus accepted Mr. Annan's plan, terrorist operations have escalated, including acts of aggression and the killing of Government forces and civilians; the sabotage and destruction of infrastructure; and the forcible eviction of peaceful citizens and their relocation to prefabricated camps in neighbouring countries, with the objective of laying the groundwork for the creation of a refugee crisis to be used for political ends and later built upon to establish so-called buffer zones that would, in turn, justify calls for foreign military intervention.

In that context, we find worrisome the ill intentions of some States members of the Council with regard to Syria, in that they deliberately do not hold

armed gangs accountable for their crimes or for their acts of aggression against Syrian civilians and military personnel.

For our part, we have offered, and provided, to Mr. Annan documented information on the violations that were perpetrated by armed gangs after the ceasefire went into effect yesterday. There have been 50 such violations, including the killing of dozens of civilians as well as army and law enforcement personnel, not to mention the destruction of many public and private installations.

What we find puzzling in this respect is that some of those who claim to care about human rights have paid no attention to the information submitted by numerous international bodies other than the Syrian Government about the grave human rights violations perpetrated by armed groups in Syria. Those violations include kidnapping and the holding of hostages for ransom as well as the torture and execution of members of the police force, the army and civilians who are regarded as supporters of the Government. Moreover, armed groups in Syria are recruiting child soldiers and using civilians as human shields. And to all this we can add the many in-depth field exposes published by major media organizations that confirm the fact that armed gangs in Syria are engaging in unprecedented criminal activities.

Here I would like to make mention of the important article published by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* concerning a meeting between its correspondent and two criminals in hospitals in Tripoli and Lebanon. In that interview, the latter admitted that they had slaughtered 150 people by knife as per the instructions that they had received from their commanders in the armed groups.

Syria expresses the hope that Mr. Annan will deal with the crisis in a comprehensive manner. It affirms that in return for the official Syrian commitment to guarantee the success of the mission, Mr. Annan must also hold the necessary meetings with the various Arab regional and international parties that have ties with the armed groups in order to ensure that they abide by the cessation of violence.

The success of Mr. Annan's mission cannot be guaranteed by official Syrian support alone; indeed, the aforementioned States must abide by their commitment to freeze and halt the funding, arming and training of armed groups, refrain from encouraging them to

continue their acts of terrorism and stop providing safe haven to their members. Those countries must also stop escalating and encouraging the Syrian opposition to reject any initiative aimed at launching a comprehensive national dialogue with the goal of finding at a peaceful political solution to the crisis in Syria.

It is worth noting here that while Mr. Annan was holding intensive talks with his Syrian interlocutors, some parties were holding conferences in Istanbul in parallel to Mr. Annan's plan, in a clear attempt to circumvent his mission and the role of the United Nations as well as to undermine the mission's role and its chances of success in its attempt to help Syria emerge from the crisis. Some have even endorsed a funding mechanism that would enable Gulf countries to fund armed groups by offering salaries to their members, to say nothing of the pledges made by those attending the conference to provide \$100 million to fan the flames of the crisis rather than extinguishing them.

Added to that are the calls made during the conference by the Foreign Minister of Qatar urging military intervention in Syria and the establishment of so-called safe zones on our territory. In that regard, we also note the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia that arming the Syrian opposition was necessary.

We wish to raise the question here of what it means when some States say that they support Mr. Annan's mission while at the same time they undertake parallel efforts aimed at ensuring the necessary funding for armed groups — to provide them weapons and militarize them — impose sanctions on the Syrian people and call for direct military intervention in my country.

All of that completely contradicts the text of Mr. Annan's plan. We would therefore like to affirm before the Council that the ongoing support for armed groups will pose a genuine threat to Mr. Annan's plan. The parties involved are responsible for shedding the blood of Syrians and spreading terrorism in the country. The countries that have imposed unjust economic sanctions on the Syrian people are also complicit in the crisis. Those States cannot shed crocodile tears over the difficulties facing Syrian citizens every day while they are themselves to a large extent responsible for those hardships.

What else could be the purpose for externally manipulating the exchange rate of the Syrian pound? What is the purpose of preventing Syrian expatriates from wiring money to their families in Syria? What could be the goal in damaging Syria's energy sector? Is the goal of all that to guarantee the well-being of the Syrian people and meet their demands for reform? What about the European Union's imposition of sanctions on Syria's Ministry of Energy? Will that help to deliver electric power to the Syrian people? All of this adds up to an unethical crisis that we must examine.

What is happening in Syria is a manifestation of a geopolitical conflict over regional roles. It is a settling of scores, some of them old and others of newer vintage. The main weapon in the conflict seems to involve pitting political pan-Arabism against extremist political Islam. Extremist manifestations are being spread in order to fuel future wars in the region that will come in the form of sectarian, religious and ethnic crises intended to fragment the region. All this aims at bringing an end to the last locus of coexistence, brotherliness and diversity in the region, as well as to entrench the concept of a confrontation among religions, cultures and civilizations.

In conclusion, Syria reiterates its commitment with regard to the Joint Special Envoy's plan. We are prepared to continue to cooperate with him in order to bring an end to the crisis in Syria. We hope that Mr. Annan will not allow any party to bypass his plan or circumvent its provisions. The resolution that the Council has adopted today requires the commitment of the countries that proposed it and voted in its favour and have continued to support armed groups in Syria.

While we believe that the resolution is not balanced, Syria believes that it is in its own interests to ensure the return of security and stability to our

country. We hope that the countries that supported the resolution will implement it effectively and refrain from sending lethal and non-lethal assistance alike to the terrorists and armed groups.

Before I conclude my statement, I should also like to reiterate that the suffering, hopes and aspirations of the Syrian people go beyond being mere commodities in the hands of speculators in the marketplace of political interests and deals. The Syrian people do not need a few million dollars to buy bulletproof vests. Instead, they need help to live in safety, peace, freedom and stability without increasing tensions among its various factions. The Syrian people need the lifting of the unjust sanctions imposed against them, for they are resulting in billions of dollars in losses. That is the only way in which those who adopted today's resolution can help the Syrian people, rather than providing Israel with six submarines that can be equipped with nuclear weapons and creating tension in the region conducive towards more war and aggression. Whether Arab or not, the people of the region will serve as the fodder for such war.

(spoke in French)

My colleague the Ambassador of France mentioned the Syrian people in saying that the time of violence is a thing of the past. I completely agree with him. I would just remind him, however, that the time of trusteeship is over as well. His statement to the Syrian people is at the very least untimely, given that, on 17 April, they will celebrate their day of independence from French occupation.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on my list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.